

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel said on Friday it had seized espionage equipment intended for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). Israel customs authority spokeswoman Idit Lev-Zerachia confirmed a report in the Yedioth Ahronot daily that said customs officials at Tel Aviv's Ben-Gurion airport found the equipment on Thursday in the luggage of an "American youth." It gave no further description of the youth. Yedioth said the equipment included scanners, surveillance equipment, miniature cameras and recorders, listening devices, microphones and devices to detect "bugs." Initial investigations revealed the equipment was intended for Palestinian preventive security head Jibril Rajoub in the Jericho self-rule enclave, the newspaper said. "It's true," Ms. Lev-Zerachia said when asked to comment on the report. But Colonel Rajoub told Reuters: "I don't know anything about any of this."

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More to hold talks in Egypt, Israel

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. Vice President Al Gore will hold separate talks next week with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres. It was announced on Friday. Mr. Gore is scheduled to leave for Cairo on Sunday for talks with Mr. Mubarak the next day. He meets with Mr. Peres on Tuesday and returns to Washington on Wednesday.

Arafat updates Ben Ali on Palestinian situation

TUNIS (AFP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat held talks here Friday with Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to update him on the "latest developments" in the Palestinian situation, officials said. Mr. Arafat, quoted by the Tunisian agency TAP, said they had talked about historic Palestinian elections to be held on Jan. 20 as well as the "difficulties" encountered. The Palestinians would open negotiations with Israel in May on the "fundamental" issue of Jerusalem as well as Palestinian refugees, Jewish settlers and water-sharing. Mr. Arafat told Ben Ali the Palestinian leader also paid tribute to the "constant assistance" provided by Tunisia to the Palestinians, and welcomed help in setting up Palestinian institutions in the autonomous territories in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Mr. Arafat later left for the Gaza Strip.

Yemen to sign peace with Israel after Syria accord

ANAA (AFP) — Yemen is ready to sign a peace deal with Israel after the Jewish state concludes an accord with Syria, a senior Yemeni official said Friday. "The future of the Middle East requires a new vision, which will come to fruition when Syria signs an accord with Israel," the official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said. "Yemen is in favour of a comprehensive peace including trade links," he added, saying his country above all wanted to implement policies that would develop its economy. Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres said he had met with Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh at a lunch in Paris on Thursday, where both leaders attended a requiem mass for former President Francois Mitterrand. "He told me that when we achieve peace with the Syrians, he believed Yemen will follow in the same direction," Mr. Peres said. Yemen ended the two leaders had met (see page 2).

Israel invites Muslim and Coptic leaders to Jerusalem

AMMANHUR, Egypt (AFP) — Israel has invited the head of Egypt's Muslims and the patriarch of the Coptic Church to sit occupied Jerusalem. Israeli Religious Affairs Minister Shimon Shetreet said Friday. He said during a visit to Egypt he had invited the Muslim mufti, Sheikh Muhammad Syed Tantawi, and Pope Shenouda III to sit the Holy City. Sheikh Tantawi replied that "when he receives a formal invitation, he will consider it," while Pope Shenouda III said "he hopes one day to visit Jerusalem," the Israeli minister said during a pilgrimage to the tomb of Rabbi Yaakov ben Hatzira in Damanhur, northern Egypt. Mr. Shetreet said he had raised the issue of the Deir Sultan Monastery in Jerusalem with Pope Shenouda III who has accused Israel of giving it away in 1947 to the Ethiopian church, then it belonged to the Egyptian Copts. "We are very reluctant to intervene in a dispute and it is almost 24 years that the matter has been pending," he said. "We hope that one day they will sit together and propose a solution. Any solution they will propose to us, we will agree."

Military experts to join Syrian-Israeli peace talks Jan. 24

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Israel and Syria are to resume peace talks later this month with military experts joining in. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Friday after lengthy talks with President Hafez Al Assad.

Mr. Christopher won the go-ahead for one of his main objectives in the talks with President Assad — to bring in military experts to the negotiations as demanded by Israel.

He told a news conference they would be "senior military officials, below the chief-of-staff level, experts who have the confidence of their two leaders."

Both countries agreed the talks "could be expanded by appropriate experts as necessary to make them the most effective," he said.

Mr. Assad's spokesman said the negotiations would be held at Wye Plantation, where they resumed last month after a six-month stalemate when Israeli and Syrian chiefs-of-staff failed in June to agree on security arrangements.

A senior U.S. official said the talks would be held in two rounds starting Jan. 24. The first round will last three days, before a short recess and further talks resuming Jan. 29 for a few more days. After the discussions Mr. Christopher is to set travel back to the Middle East. Syrian and U.S. officials said. From there on Syrian and Israeli negotiators are expected to take it one step at a time and in later stages more experts, such as economy and water specialists, could be asked to join the discussions, a U.S. official hinted.

"There will be a follow-up in as many areas as we can," he said.

"But at this point we concluded there was no need to expand the group in other areas."

Syrian presidential spokesman Joubran Kourieh confirmed that agreement was reached on the resumption of talks on Jan. 24.

Mr. Kourieh said: "A military expert from each side would join the delegations to help discussion of security arrangements."

Mr. Christopher, who began his 16th peace shuttle to the region in Israel on Wednesday, said of his talks with Mr. Assad and Israeli

Prime Minister Shimon Peres: "We have established a new and effective mechanism for negotiations and for accelerated progress."

Mr. Assad and Mr. Peres "see that an agreement between their countries will result in a widening of the circle of peace."

He cautioned "there is much hard work to be done (but) both Peres and Assad are determined to see that the work is completed."

Mr. Christopher went into the meeting with Mr. Assad wanting to know his "reactions and ideas on how to move this peace process forward, what format, what pace, when and who should be in the (negotiations) room," his spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

As he had prepared for the meeting prospects for progress had seemed gloomy.

Mr. Peres told members of his Labour Party that Israel's general elections planned for Oct. 29 could be brought forward to June 4 if there was no breakthrough with Syria, underlining the urgency for progress.

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Hamas stages rally for Ayash, demands return of its weapons

GAZA CITY (AFP) — More than 20,000 people rallied here Friday to glorify Hamas bomb-maker Yahya Ayash a week after his murder, as the group urged Palestinian authorities to return its guns as defence against Israel.

"Vengeance will come soon," warned banners in Hebrew. "Israel, prepare yourself for a new type of war with Hamas."

Six masked militants of the Hamas underground wing, Izzeddin Al Qassam, fired Kalashnikovs and M-16 rifles into the air, drawing applause from the crowd gathered in a football stadium.

Israel has welcomed the killing of Ayash, its most wanted man, without directly admitting responsibility. Known as the "engineer," he was held responsible for the deaths of at least 45 Israelis in a series of bombings.

Men and women, segregated at different ends of Al Yarmouk stadium, also carried banners that read: "The blood of Yahya Ayash will be a curse on the heads of the Jews."

Demonstrators burnt Israeli flags to cries of Allahu Akbar, many of them pledging their lives for holy war. One of the armed militant warned that Ayash had his pupils who would exact revenge on Israel. "It's true that you killed the engineer, but he left behind him a whole class of engineers," he said.

Thousands of posters of Ayash, one of the guerrilla chiefs of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), were distributed to the crowd.

T-shirts with his photo were on sale at six shekels (\$2) each, and young Hamas members put on shows of

karate exercises, one of them fracturing a leg in the process.

Mahmoud Zahar, a senior Hamas official, called for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to return confiscated weapons of Hamas members for them to defend themselves.

"We are not allowing anything to get established here unless our prisoners are released and our weapons returned so that we can protect ourselves," Dr. Zahar told journalists.

Dr. Zahar urged the PNA to be "much more serious with collaborators of Israel" and to confiscate the properties of Kamal Hamad, who is accused of passing on the booby-trapped mobile phone which blew off Ayash's head on Jan. 5.

The confiscated properties

Bahraini gathering dispersed

AL QAFOOL, Bahrain (R) — Bahrain security forces on Friday fired tear-gas and rubber bullets to disperse some 100 young youths trying to gather inside a Shi'ite Muslim mosque which was sealed off after noon prayers, witnesses said.

Additional security troops in full riot gear were later rushed to the area, five kilometres west of the capital Manama. They were seen chasing the youths down streets clogged by a traffic jam.

Shouts were heard and witnesses said security forces were using rubber bullets. It was not known if anyone was wounded.

The clashes erupted about four hours after noon prayers which were incident-free. Earlier on Friday, Muslim Shi'ite and Sunni mosques in Bahrain held the well-attended weekly prayers and no clashes were reported.

But witnesses later said police had sealed off Sadiq Mosque in Al Qafuol after

Young Egyptian Brothers plan own political party

CAIRO (AFP) — Young members of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood have applied to set up a new political party to bridge the gap between armed militants and the state, one of the founders said Friday.

It is the first time since the movement was set up in 1929 that any of its members have decided to create their own political party.

"Although our actions stem from the orientation of the Muslim Brotherhood, our party is mainly formed of young people, is independent and has no political ties," with the movement, Salah Abdul Maqsood, told AFP.

He said it would be called the Centre Party.

The Brotherhood is led by a dozen leading personalities over the age of 70.

"Among the 74 founders who asked to be allowed to set up the party... there are lawyers, engineers and professors from (Islamic) universities as well as two Christians," Mr. Abdul Maqsood said.

He added that 100 leading Coptic Christians had also said they would join the party once Egyptian authorities gave it the go-ahead.

The government commit-

tee in charge of such applications has turned down several requests in recent years saying the political programmes put forward did "not differ from the 14 parties" which already exist.

It will rule on the young Muslim Brotherhood members application within two months.

Mr. Abdul Maqsood said the centre party would mainly call for "national dialogue between the various groups within political society who could reach an understanding" with the armed militant factions.

The Brotherhood, which used to be tolerated because of its non-violent stand, was accused in the spring of 1994 of backing a militant campaign to topple the government of President Hosni Mubarak. More than 940 have died since the campaign was launched in March 1992.

About 60 Brotherhood members ran in elections at the end of last year which saw Mr. Mubarak National Democratic Party returned with a landslide victory, amid cries of fraud and vote-rigging from the opposition.

The only successful Brotherhood contender was Ali Fath Al Bab.

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A Palestinian bows for Friday prayers outside his Bethlehem shop which is covered with election campaign posters for various candidates in the Jan. 20 elections to a self-rule council for the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Reuters photo)

Monitors criticise Palestinian election campaign, say PNA media favour Fateh

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Groups monitoring next week's Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip reported several problems on Friday, including less access to the media for candidates opposing Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

But Palestinian analysts said the real problem in the run-up to the Jan. 20 poll was that candidates were running on similar platforms, making the contest boring.

Media watchdog Reporters Without Borders said the Voice of Palestine radio and Palestine TV were giving more coverage to candidates from Mr. Arafat's Fateh movement than to those from the other 17 competing political groups.

Mr. Arafat also got more

air time than Samiba Khalila, his only challenger for the post of president of a Palestinian executive branch of an 88-member legislative council, the group said.

The council will run Palestinian affairs in self-rule areas in the West Bank and Gaza under the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) accord signed in September. Some one million Palestinians are eligible to vote in 16 electoral districts, including Israeli-occupied East Jerusalem.

"At the end of the official campaign's first week, the imbalance between Fateh and other parties on one hand, and Mr. Arafat and Mrs. Khalil on the other remains very pronounced in the Palestinian public radio and TV," the media group said in

a statement. Opinion polls show Mr. Arafat and his Fateh list far ahead of other factions in the first such elections in Palestinian history.

An Israeli group accredited by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to monitor the elections said it had "heard repeated claims over the past two weeks regarding bribes in the form of jobs" to coax candidates to withdraw in favour of Fateh members.

The group, Peace Watch, said several former candidates were now employed in senior positions in ministries of the PNA.

Wafa Abdul Rahman of the Gaza office of the Washington-based National Democratic Institute, also observing the elections, said it had received no complaints

of any serious violations. "There are small violations. There is nothing serious that could affect the results of the elections," she told Reuters.

For example, candidates in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have plastered walls with election posters, ignoring regulations to use only specified billboards.

"We have received complaints that campaign workers for one candidate were pasting their advertisements over other candidates," said Ms. Abdul Rahman.

"We have some reports that candidates are offering bribes to voters. But we have not received any complaints," she said.

The Voice of Palestine

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Clinton hits 1996 campaign trail in Nashville

NASHVILLE, Tennessee (AFP) — President Bill Clinton hit the campaign trail Friday here in the capital of country-western music, making a case for sending American troops to Bosnia in his first political trip of 1996.

"Bosnia is a country that is so closely tied to others that if that war were to spread it could cause many Americans and many other people around the world... to lose their lives," the president told workers here.

The president paid tribute to three of the workers at the Peterbilt truck plant who had been pulled off the assembly line to serve in the Balkans peacekeeping mission.

"All Americans should be proud of what they are doing," Mr. Clinton said of the 20,000 U.S. troops who are to take part in the 60,000-member NATO-led operation in Bosnia (see page 12).

Many blue-collar workers here in the land of the "Grand Ol' Opry" are likely to be more concerned with whether the budget battles in Washington will ultimately spell tax relief.

But set to visit the troops this weekend, Mr. Clinton devoted much of his remarks to the subject, warning against the isolationist forces in Washington — where the Republican-led Congress has

Chechens free some hostages, but no sign of end to stand-off

OUTSIDE PERVOVAIS-KAYA, Russia (Agencies) — Chechen guerrillas freed some women and children in Dagestan on Friday, a police chief said, but at least 187 other hostages were still captive and an armed stand-off continued.

All Aliyev, police chief in the regional centre of Khasavyurt, said 17 women and five children were let go, but he did not say if this was done as part of a deal, or unconditionally.

Other reports on Russian television said that less than half a dozen women or children had been handed over, and that there had been last-minute hitches in the hand-over.

Interfax news agency quoted Dagestani police as saying that the Chechen rebels still held 150 civilian men and 37 police officers prisoner in the village of Pervomaiskaya.

General Alexander Mikhailov, a spokesman for Russian troops encircling the village, said the Chechens had freed four women, three children and a teenager.

Journalists outside the village did not see the hostages but Gen. Mikhailov said they had been taken to a military checkpoint.

"We want to get the rest of the hostages released and do not want any information to come out that would hinder this," Mr. Mikhailov told correspondents outside Pervomaiskaya.

The rebels are demanding the right to cross back into Chechnya and have asked to be accompanied by promi-

ent Russian parliamentarians, journalists and representatives of humanitarian agencies.

Russian authorities were demanding that all the hostages be released at once.

Pervomaiskaya was surrounded by a large force of Russian tanks, armoured personnel carriers, heavy artillery and commandos.

Landmines were placed in the buses, where the male captives were held, to act as a deterrent against Russian forces opening fire, Dagestan's interior ministry was quoted as saying by ITAR-TASS news agency.

ITAR-TASS said the mined buses were placed as shields in front of the village school and mosque, where some women and child hostages were still being held.

The hostage crisis began dramatically on Tuesday when the Chechen guerrillas, who are fighting for independence from Russia, burst into the Dagestani town of Kizlyar, attacked a Russian air base, then took 2,000 people hostage in a hospital and demanded a Russian pull-out from Chechnya.

Local Dagestani authorities got the Chechens to free all but 160 hostages on Wednesday. The guerrillas then set off for Chechnya, where they planned to free the rest of their captives and escape.

However, the Russian military, embarrassed by the raid on Kizlyar, was ordered to block the convoy, resulting in the stand-off.

A Dagestani government spokesman criticised the Rus-

sian military for "torpedoing" the earlier agreement, Interfax news agency said.

Guerrilla leader Salman Raduyev, bearded and wearing a green Islamic headband, promised on television to fight "to the last bullet" if his men were attacked.

Dzokhar Dudayev, the top leader of the Chechen independence movement, said in an interview with Voice of America radio that the main aim of the guerrillas had been to attack the helicopter base in Kizlyar.

"Taking hostages happened due to the circumstances," he said.

Meanwhile, two liberal Russian leaders, Grigory Yavlinsky and Yegor Gaidar, offered themselves as replacement hostages, Russian news agencies reported.

Mr. Raduyev has demanded that liberal leaders accompany his group back into Chechnya, but this is unlikely to be agreed to by the Russian authorities.

The hostage taking has exacerbated ethnic tensions in the patchwork northern Caucasus region.

Cossack groups have called on armed action against Chechens, and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said it was worried there might be reprisals against Chechen war refugees.

UNHCR spokesman Ron Redmond said: "We are concerned about the hostage situation. This incident could have major impact on public

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France ready to help guarantee Israel-Syria deal

PARIS (R) — French President Jacques Chirac expressed willingness on Thursday to help guarantee peace between Israel, Syria and Lebanon, his spokeswoman said.

Catherine Colonna said Mr. Chirac had told Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres that "France is ready, if the request is made by all parties, to participate in a guarantee of security that could be decided."

However, she said the question of sending French troops was not specifically raised at the meeting after Mr. Peres joined world leaders at a memorial for former President Francois Mitterrand.

Mr. Peres, asked if France was ready to send troops to the Golan Heights after an Israeli withdrawal, told reporters: "The French president said if it would be necessary, France would be prepared to participate with a guarantee of security."

He said the nature of the guarantee had not been discussed but, in response to another question, suggested Mr. Chirac had expressed readiness to send troops to both Syria and Lebanon.

Israel and Syria are conducting talks with U.S. mediation on a peace agreement under which the Jewish state would withdraw from the Golan Heights. Washington has offered to send troops to guarantee the peace.

Mr. Peres said the talks with Syria had made "quite a good beginning" but "time is short and the problems are many."

The Israeli leader also said he had a brief first meeting

with Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh during a lunch at Mr. Chirac's Elysee Palace after they attended the Mitterrand memorial.

"He (Saleh) said that at the moment we sign a peace agreement with the Syrians, he believes that Yemen will follow in the same direction," Mr. Peres said.

Mr. Peres said he hoped the bilateral talks with Syria could be transformed over time into regional negotiations involving Lebanon and eventually all of Israel's neighbours.

"In principle, we believe it is necessary to convert the negotiations with Syria into regional negotiations — that is to say, with Syria and Lebanon," he said.

Yemen denied that a meeting took place in Paris between President Saleh and Mr. Peres.

The official SABA news agency quoted an official source accompanying Mr. Saleh as saying "news that circulated today (Thursday) that an official meeting was held today between President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Israeli Premier Shimon Peres was baseless."

"There is no kind of official or other contacts between officials from the Republic of Yemen and Israel," he added.

The Yemeni source noted that Mr. Saleh and Mr. Peres were among heads of state and leaders attending the funeral Mitterrand "and their presence together at the same place does not mean in any way that an official meeting has taken place."

Iran accuses U.S. of splitting Asia

BOMBAY (R) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati accused the United States on Friday of keeping Asia divided and said Asian countries should rally together on the economic front and bury their quarrels.

Closer economic cooperation could help draw the continent together, solve old disputes and dampen new tensions," Mr. Velayati said at the start of a three-day visit to India.

"Economic cooperation and partnership will reduce tensions and... give rise to persistent stability and tranquillity," he told the Confederation of Indian Industry in Bombay.

He accused the U.S. of trying to keep Asians divided. "This is the policy of the U.S. to make difficulties for the countries in this region... they have tried to deepen the differences and rift between countries," he said.

He condemned recent moves by the U.S. Congress to allocate up to \$20 million for covert action against Iran, which he said infringed international law and he vowed to defeat them.

"What the Americans are trying to do is against international law," Mr. Velayati told reporters.

"This policy will fail and be totally defeated," he said.

India's relations with Pakistan, troubled by arms sales by the U.S. and always prickly because of the two nations' dispute over Kash-

mir, could be helped by economic cooperation, he said.

"We have always been against any kind of militarisation of this sensitive region," Mr. Velayati said.

"If we want to strengthen peaceful relations between India and Pakistan, apart from solving the traditional difficulties, we must help develop the positive points," Mr. Velayati said.

He said he expected a gas pipeline being planned from southern Iran via Pakistan to India would help bring smoother relations between India and Pakistan.

He hoped the two would peacefully solve their differences in the near future, not only as part of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, but within a larger regional grouping.

"If they have economic cooperation, certainly the future of relations between these two countries will be more promising."

Regional economic groupings were a key feature of the post-cold war era, Mr. Velayati said, noting that Iran had initiated two projects for multilateral cooperation in its own region.

"One of these has been the expansion of the economic cooperation organisation formerly consisting of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey — to include all Central Asian countries."

A second initiative was the formation of the Caspian Sea Organisation," Mr. Velayati said.

U.S. plans to Cyprus solutions are in limbo

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A U.S. peace initiative to reconcile Turkish and Greek Cypriots on Cyprus has run into snags over leadership uncertainties in Greece and Turkey, a U.S. official said Thursday.

Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke last month said he planned to travel to Cyprus, Turkey and Greece in January to seek a settlement to the decades-old territorial dispute.

But a State Department official said Thursday a visit to Cyprus by Holbrooke, who brokered a peace accord for Bosnia in November, has not been scheduled for this month.

"There are a lot of factors that make it indeterminate right now," the official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said.

"It has not been determined when he is going to go," he added.

The official cited ongoing efforts by Turkish Prime Minister-designate Necmet-

tin Erbakan to form a coalition government following his appointment Tuesday, and the poor health of Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu.

The Holbrooke trip was regarded as a high-profile mission that could resolve a dispute that has eluded international efforts for decades.

But the official cautioned that the trip was conditional on the administration's assessment that a visit by the envoy to the island would yield results.

"He would go if there were some indication that by his going, the whole process might be moved forward," he said.

Mr. Holbrooke, who announced last month he will be leaving the State Department in February, said the United States was determined to make 1996 "the year of the big push on Cyprus."

The United States has been pressing for a final settlement in Cyprus as part of a di-

plomatic bid to defuse tensions between Turkey and Greece, who have yet to normalise relations.

Cyprus has been divided since 1974 when Turkey sent troops to seize the northern third of the Mediterranean island following a coup in Nicosia backed by a military junta then ruling Greece.

The Turkish Cypriots set up their own state in 1983 but it is recognised only by Ankara.

President Bill Clinton told former Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller in April that the United States would "be active in the search for a bi-communal federation in Cyprus in the next few years."

That plan would provide for a Turkish withdrawal from the north and the establishment of a single state with representation for both ethnic groups.

The U.S. administration effort to reunify Cyprus enjoys wide support in Congress where the House of

Representatives in September overwhelmingly adopted a resolution supporting efforts towards a final settlement.

Last month, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee adopted a similar resolution, clearing the way for a vote on the floor of the Senate that would give the administration added support in pursuing the peace initiative.

The U.S. push for Cyprus coincides with renewed interest in Europe toward the Cyprus problem with the European Union discussing plans to appoint a special envoy for the region.

U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus Richard Boucher travelled to Washington last week to brief the State Department on the situation in the Mediterranean, a diplomatic source said.

"There is some speculation that he (Holbrooke) may make the trip in early February but nobody knows," he said.

Aid agencies warn against Somaliland currency move

NAIROBI (R) — Aid agencies working in troubled northwestern Somalia warned on Friday that if a proposed currency law was passed it might be impossible for them to keep operating.

The Somali Aid Coordination Body (SACB), grouping agencies operating in Somalia, said in a statement in Nairobi it was gravely concerned about "the severe negative repercussions" of the law.

The row is the result of steps taken by the administration of President Mohamed Ibrahim Egal of the self-declared, but internationally unrecognised, republic of Somaliland to increase its revenues while it is locked in a long war with clan rebels.

Under the draft law, aid agencies would have to change all dollars into new Somaliland shillings at a rate of 80 shillings to the dollar, one-fifth of the current rate to the Somali "shilling."

Aid officials said Mr. Egal had not yet signed the currency law but if he did in its present form many, and perhaps all, agencies could no longer afford to work in northwestern Somalia.

"The SACB draws the attention of the relevant authorities to the fact that, should such measures be introduced in their present or similar form, they would make it extremely difficult, if not impossible for the international aid community to continue their operations in the north west," the SACB said.

Mr. Egal was not immediately available for comment.

A British aid agency pulled out of Somaliland on Thursday while Mr. Egal's authorities announced a victory over rebels there and their clan fighting flared near the southern Somali port of Kismayo.

Save the Children Fund (SCF) said its staff were leaving the Somaliland capital Hargeisa because of "operational and security problems inside the country." Officials said the decision to pull out was taken before the new currency problem arose.

The British agency has operated in Somaliland since 1991.

The Somaliland government said on Thursday it had crushed an attack southeast of Hargeisa by opposition forces wearing the same uniforms as faction leader

Mohammad Farah Aideded's militia.

Mr. Egal has been fighting an intermittent rebellion by rival clan militiamen allied with General Aideded since November 1994 but has failed to subdue it despite repeated public vows to do so.

Somaliland broke away from the rest of Somalia in 1991.

It covers the area of the former British Somaliland protectorate, which joined with the former Italian-administered Somalia when the whole country received independence in 1960.

15 killed in fighting

At least 15 people have been killed and many others wounded in new fighting in Kismayo, a faction radio said Friday.

Thursday's fighting, between militiamen loyal to the region's military strongman, General Mohammad Said Hersi Morgan, and those of the United Somali Congress/Somal National Alliance (USC/NSA) faction of Osman Hassan Ali Ato, occurred at Yontoy and Gobwein, 18 kilometres north of Kismayo.

Mr. Ato's Radio South Mogadishu said. Quoting a USC/NSA faction spokesman, the radio said Gen. Morgan's forces had launched a massive attack against Mr. Ato's militia defence lines, but the attack was repulsed after a fierce three-hour battle.

The radio accused Gen. Morgan's supporters of indiscriminately massacring civilians in the two villages before they were expelled by supporters of Mr. Ato, a one-time financier-turned bitter political rival of Gen. Aideded, who heads the main faction in the USC/NSA.

Gen. Morgan's faction has declined to comment on the fighting in the Lower Jubba Valley, although Mr. Ato's radio said that the new development would not affect peace talks between the two sides scheduled to be held in Kismayo on Jan. 17.

Gen. Morgan's militiamen captured Yontoy two days ago from Gen. Aideded's militia supporters who occupied it several months ago during a battle that left at least five people dead and several wounded on Wednesday.

As a result of the new fighting, 300 families have fled Yontoy and Gobwein

4 on trial in Switzerland in Iraq 'supergun' case

LAUSANNE (AFP) — The trial begins Monday of four leading Swiss businessmen charged with helping Iraq build what was to be the biggest cannon in history.

The trial, which is expected to last from four to six weeks, is part of the much mediated "supergun" affair in which a half dozen European countries were caught up at the beginning of the decade.

At the time Iraq was reported to be importing parts from all over the world to build a huge cannon with a range of between 700 and 1,000 kilometres capable of hitting targets throughout the Middle East including Israel.

The project, code-named Babylon by the Iraqis, had been initiated about 10 years earlier during the war between Iran and Iraq. It was abandoned in October 1991 after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

The four facing trial in Lausanne are three directors of Von Roll, Switzerland's biggest steel group and the director of the trading company Uldry who allegedly acted as their intermediary with Iraq.

The detailed charge list will be made public only when the trial opens but public prosecutor has notably accused the four of violating legislation on the export of war material.

This law of 1972 bans the manufacture and sale of such material without permission from the government and calls for sanctions against companies providing false information to secure official permission for such trade.

Von Roll claims the Iraqis deceived it about the ultimate purpose of the hydraulic cylinders ordered from the firm. The order received from the Iraqi Ministry of Industry said the parts were to be used to build forging presses.

The "supergun" affair came to light when 131 tonnes of parts of gigantic proportions were seized in Switzerland and Germany

in May 1990, shortly before Iraqi forces invaded and occupied Kuwait the following August.

Deliveries from Von Roll had been spaced out from 1988 to 1990 for a total value of 10 million Swiss francs or more than \$8 million.

The Swiss government in 1990 ordered an investigation which has taken six years and culminates in the trial opening next week.

The parts seized in 1990 in Switzerland and Germany proved to be only a fraction of a project involving firms in several other European countries, Iraq supposedly disseminated the orders among several countries to avoid giving away the exact nature of what it was building.

In April and May 1990, suspect materials were also seized in Britain, Greece, Turkey and Italy. A few months previously, Canadian engineer Gerald Bull, who pioneered the supergun, had been murdered in Brussels.

On Oct. 8, 1991, the leader of a delegation of United Nations ballistic experts, Douglas Englund, announced from Baghdad that Iraq had destroyed a cannon measuring 52.2 metres in length and 350 millimetres in diameter.

Some experts challenge the "supergun" theory, saying the project was unfeasible.

The argument has been taken up by Von Roll which argues that the parts supplied to Iraq were so big that a gun of this size could never have functioned.

This made it "impossible for those involved to recognise any possibility of military application" for the material on order, a Von Roll spokesman said.

The four accused, who include the former director-general of Von Roll Heinz Frech, face up to five years imprisonment and a maximum fine of 500,000 Swiss francs (more than \$400,000).

Iraq publishes Libyan call to attack Jordan

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's state-run newspapers published on Thursday a speech made by Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi in which he urged Iraqis to take up arms and attack Jordan.

Baghdad newspapers carried Colonel Qadhafi's call to arms on their front pages, quoting the Libyan colonel as saying Jordan had turned itself into "a nest" where a conspiracy against Iraq was being hatched.

"The Iraqi people have the right to attack Jordan and destroy this nest," Col. Qadhafi was quoted as saying.

The newspapers said his remarks were made in a speech commemorating a battle against the Italian occupation of Libya.

Col. Qadhafi said the Iraqis should move against Jordan and King Hussein without seeking the permission of their government.

"The Iraqi people should bypass their government and army... Their duty is to grab machine-guns, grenades and rifles and attack the nests conspiring against the unity of Iraq."

He accused King Hussein of trying to divide Iraq. Official Libyan news agency carried similar remarks made by the Libyan leader on Dec. 24.

Col. Qadhafi's remarks were the first personal attack on King Hussein to appear in the official Iraqi press.

"When the Jordanian ruler says that he has a right in Iraq he has to understand that... he got this right because his grandfather was an agent to

the British," Col. Qadhafi was quoted as Col. Qadhafi attacked Jordan for 1994 peace agreement with Israel and last November made a speech saying he trusted all Arab rulers. The previous month, however, he sent a message to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein congratulating him on his victory on referendum on his presidency.

Publication of Col. Qadhafi's belligerent remarks reflect a deterioration in relations between Iraq and Jordan.

Last year Jordan gave refuge to two key government defectors, both sons-in-law of the Iraqi president.

Iraq, after a long silence reacted angrily this week to Jordan's shift in policy.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Sabah accused his Jordanian counterpart, Abdul Karim Kabariti, of attempts to interfere in Iraq's domestic affairs.

Jordan has to import all oil from Iraq, after Gulf countries cut off their supplies, and has so far been Iraq's main gateway to the outside world.

Diplomats said Iraq, its economy devastated by U.N. sanctions, was trying to develop other outlets for its trade so it would not be completely isolated if Jordan closed its border.

They said truck traffic between Iraq and Turkey has boomed recently as controls on the Jordanian side of the border found that it was now easier for them to do business with Ankara.

Sweden under fire for expelling Kurd families

STOCKHOLM (Agencies) — The Swedish government and police, enforcing a tighter immigration policy, came under fire on Friday for the expulsion of two Kurdish families to Turkey after a five-year battle to be allowed to stay in Sweden.

A chartered plane carrying 11 people — two adults and nine children — left northern Sweden on Friday morning for Ankara after an emotional police operation to expel the Kurds, who have lived in Sweden illegally for almost five years.

Villagers in the tiny community of Asele in Lapland scuffled with police when the government on Thursday evening rejected a final appeal from the two related Kurdish families — both called Sincari — to stay in Sweden.

Two policemen and a teenage girl were slightly injured in scuffles that broke out when the family was being taken to a hotel. The refugees wept as they were pushed onto a bus.

Three family members, one of them an 18-year-old, disappeared and were not expelled, police said. Family friends said the young man had threatened to kill himself.

Two small children were taken from their school bus by police directly to the hotel and not allowed to return to their homes before being taken to the plane.

Lutheran Archbishop Gunnar Wierman appealed to Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson to reverse the decision.

"The length of time the families have been in Sweden, the children's adaptation to our society and their psychological situation are, in my view, sufficient reasons for them to stay in our country," he said.

Several political parties the human rights group amnesty international and various rights organisations, including the Swedish branch of Save the Children, have supported the families' plight.

The families' lawyer, Lena Isaksson, called the government's decision "grim and inhumane."

The leader of the Swedish Liberal Party, Maria Leijonhufvud, also appealed to the government to reverse the decision.

"The family is split up, and Sweden has committed itself to not contributing to the division of refugee families. Several of the children have spent their whole lives here. Treating them like this is a violation of the U.N. Convention on Children," she said.

"We are too tough-skinned and too cold-hearted when it comes to our refugee policy," she said.

Asele priest Rune Backlund said the families had become part of the community.

"Everyone on Asele has tried to support the family in different ways, economically and morally. The children are going to suffer serious psychological wounds from their brutal expulsion and their uncertain future that await them."

The two families took refuge in the local church for 15 months when they were advised they would not be allowed to stay.

Mr. Carlsson defended his decision to expel the family, accusing the parents of manipulating their children.

"It was the correct decision. If they had been allowed to stay it would have given a signal to other families to exploit their children to be allowed to stay in Sweden," he said.

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel. 73111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
14:00	Moomins (cartoon)
14:30	Wish Kid (cartoon)
15:00	Harry and the Hendersons
15:25	Blue Heelers
16:00	Drama — Voyagers
17:00	Children's Programme: C'Est Pas Sorcier
17:30	Magazine — Omnisidencies
18:00	Drama — C'Est Mon Histoire
19:00	Le Journal
19:15	Magazine — Faut Pas Rêver
19:30	New Headlines
19:35	Major Deal
20:00	Doc. — The Stamp of Greatness
20:25	The Bold And The Beautiful
21:15	Drama — The Glass Virgin (Ep.1)
22:00	News in English
22:25	Feature Film: "Hearts on Fire"
23:50	Scene — Behaving Badly
PRAYER TIMES	
05:10	Fajr
06:12	Sunrise/Dhuhr
11:44	Dhuhr
14:32	Asr
18:56	Maghrib
18:17	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifield, Tel. 811741	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637285	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637441	
De La Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637441	
Anglican Church Tel. 652626	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775291	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457	
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman	
Tel. 811295	
WEATHER	
Balkin supplied by the Department of Meteorology:	
Sunny to partly cloudy weather conditions will prevail becoming	

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

cool at night with temperatures slightly below average and winds southeasterly moderate. In Amman, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min./Max. Temp.
Amman 3/11
Aqaba 8/18
Jord. Deserts 18/11
Jordan Valley 7/17

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 11, Aqaba 18 Humidity
readings: Amman 65 per cent,
Aqaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Makhles Halaweh 819221
Dr. Bassem Kharabeh 750230
Dr. Munther Al Oruni 779599
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awwad 848170
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778376
Al Avenia pharmacy 678395
Naimah pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 626730
Yasmin pharmacy 644545
Shimani pharmacy 637661

Najaf pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281741
Akhlaq pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Amin Abdul Ruh 982393
Khalaf pharmacy 985417

HOSPITALS

Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680101
Jordan Electricity Authority 615615

Electric Power
Company 626381
RJ Flight Information 68-5330
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 68-5330

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Akilch Maternity, J. Amn. 642341/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 631641
Palestine, Shmeisam 607071
Highway Police 669131
University Hospital 645845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/8
The Islamic, Adhali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Adhali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777113/3
Al-Salibi, J. Ashrafieh 751112/8
Army, Marata 891611/1
Queen Alia Hospital 6122309/10
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and
Surgical Surgery 861490

ZARQA:
Zarqa City Hospital 119/983323
Zarqa National Hospital 119/983561

Ibn Sina Hospital 119/986732
Al Hikm Modern Hospital 119/989100

IRBID:
Pneuma Baana Hospital 012/255556
Greek Coastal Hospital 012/272725
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital 012/247100
AQABA:
Princeps Haya Hospital 1103141/11

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

*This information is supplied by
Royal Jordanian (RJ) international
department at the Queen Alia Inter-
national Airport Tel. 1181512/70-
5, where it should always be ver-
ified.*

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights
(Terminal 1)

09:00 Damascus (RJ)
09:00 Aqaba (RJ)
09:30 New Oulu (RJ)
09:30 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:00 Beirut (RJ)
10:05
10:20 Columbus (RJ)
14:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

Tarawneh donates \$25,000 prize money to charity

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan's Ambassador to the United States Faysal Tarawneh has donated \$25,000 to the orphaned children of Jordan, handing over a cheque in that amount to Minister of Social Development Salwa Damen-Masri.

The money is half of a \$50,000 award Dr. Tarawneh shared with his one-time counterpart former Israeli delegation head to the peace negotiations Eliakim Rubinstein.

The award, organised and funded by Israeli businesswoman Gita Sherover, is to be an annual prize for contributions to peace.

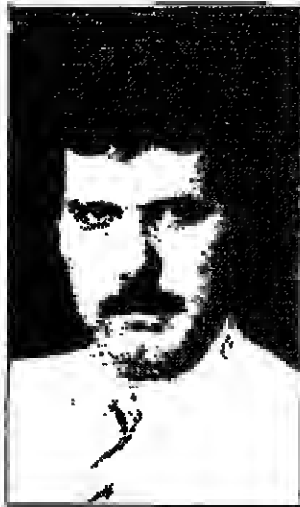
Dr. Tarawneh and Mr. Rubinstein received their prizes Wednesday at a ceremony, attended by His Majesty King Hussein, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and U.S. Secretary of State Warren

Christopher, at Beit Gabriel in Tiberias, where the King and the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had exchanged the instruments of ratification of the peace treaty signed in Oct. 1994. The ceremony was originally scheduled for Nov. 7, 1995, but was postponed in the wake of the assassination of Mr. Rabin on Nov. 5.

In presenting the cheque to Mrs. Damen-Masri on Thursday, Dr. Tarawneh said he appreciated the efforts of the Ministry of Social Development and was determined to help it care for needy orphaned children in the country.

He asked that the assistance be distributed during the month of Ramadan.

Mrs. Damen-Masri said the ministry operates six charity institutions offering assistance to 415 children in



Faysal Tarawneh

Jordan.

Dr. Tarawneh was in Amman to receive U.S. Secretary of Defence William Perry last week and to accompany the King on his one-day visit to Israel on Wednesday.

Experts to examine U.S. experience for cues on trade out-of-court settlements

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — As expectations are high of a boom in business in Jordan in the wake of the breakthroughs in the Arab-Israeli peace process, the Kingdom's legal experts are seeking to update the legal process to accommodate the needs of commerce.

The fine points of trends in the U.S. for out of court settlements that reduce the burden on the judiciary are expected to be issue in a five-day workshop that opens in Amman today with a view to familiarising Jordanian legal experts on the American experience in dealing with commercial disputes.

The so-called "alternate dispute resolution" (ADR) mechanisms are important in Jordan's efforts to attract international capital, partic-

ularly from American firms, which see the presence of such means as an essential element in their investment decisions prior to and during actual trials of commercial disputes, said Mr. Mayo, whose legal history has spanned from private practice to federal prosecution and grand jury trials involving felonies as well as law instruction at several universities.

According to Mr. Mayo, less than 20 per cent of commercial disputes in the U.S. actually go to trial, the rest being settled out of court through mediation and arbitration.

In the mid-80s it used to take an average of five years for settling commercial disputes in court in the U.S., but now it takes about 18 months as a result of developing ADR mechanisms that help resolve the

The American team will highlight their experience to the Jordanian audience and discuss six main means of out-of-court settlements prior to and during actual trials of commercial disputes, said Mr. Mayo, whose legal history has spanned from private practice to federal prosecution and grand jury trials involving felonies as well as law instruction at several universities.

According to Mr. Mayo, less than 20 per cent of commercial disputes in the U.S. actually go to trial, the rest being settled out of court through mediation and arbitration.

In the mid-80s it used to take an average of five years for settling commercial disputes in court in the U.S., but now it takes about 18 months as a result of developing ADR mechanisms that help resolve the

cases at various stages prior to going to court and thus reduce the burden on the system in terms of time and cost, Mr. Mayo told the Jordan Times in an interview.

"Ours is not a perfect answer, but it helps a lot in sparing the government a lot of expenses and time," he said, adding also that disputes often hold up the smooth flow of commerce and, as such, quick resolutions of commercial disputes were also in the interests of business.

In the context of Jordan, it should be relatively easy for the society to embrace the practice of out-of-court settlements since it is very much used in tribal mediation and arbitration, the lawyer noted.

However, he emphasised, the U.S. team's role was not to tell Jordanians what means to adopt but to outline the experience of what

is known as case management. "It is a decision that is totally up to the Jordanians to decide what is best suited for them," he said.

In the five days of deliberations, the workshop, which is presented by the Faculty of Law of the University of Jordan in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and the American Centre, will hear detailed discussions on subjects such as "Early Neutral Evaluation," "Case Management," "Mediation and Judicial Settlement," and "Summary Judgement," as well as "Modern Trends / Cases in Arbitration in the American Legal System."

The workshop will be held at the Samir Shannua Auditorium at the University of Jordan and opened by Minister of Justice Hisham Tel.

Charles Ansbacher conducts Jordanian Orchestras

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The first concert of 1996 in Amman will start with particular brilliance and glitter. Conducting the two main classical ensembles of the country, the Orchestra of the National Music Conservatory and the Orchestra of the Jordanian Armed Forces, will be the celebrated American musician, Charles Ansbacher, on Sunday at the Royal Hall, at the Philadelphia hotel in Amman.

In a performance to be held under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein, presented by the National Music Conservatory - Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the American Centre in Amman, the two orchestras will play works by George Bizet (L'Arlésienne, suite No. 2), Johannes Brahms (Hungarian dances No. 5 and 6), Johann Strauss (Die Fledermaus overture and Radetzky march), W. A. Mozart (piano concerto No. 24 in C minor, first movement), and American composers Leonard Bernstein (a selection from West Side Story) and John Philip Sousa (Stars and Stripes Forever). The orchestras will play some works separately but will join forces for two numbers at the end of the concert.

Dr. Ansbacher, who just conducted a historic and magnificent end-of-year concert in Sarajevo, transmitted live on most European TV channels, is enthusiastic about working



Charles Ansbacher conducts an orchestra in Vienna

with the Jordanian ensembles. He told the Jordan Times that during the rehearsals, he felt as much excitement from the musicians as he had pleasure working with them. He is also very optimistic about the future of classical music

in the country. Already in love with Jordan when he visited it as a tourist a year ago, he said that given the relative young age of classical orchestras and institutions in the Kingdom, they need strong and continuous support from all parties.

Exposing the young to as much classical music as possible, and in every way, is essential for the future, Dr. Ansbacher said.

With an impressive record of conducting in the United States, Charles Ansbacher is now living in

Vienna, Austria and dedicates his time to working with different orchestras from almost all over the world: Tajikistan, Egypt, Austria, the former Yugoslavia, Russia, Bulgaria, Tunisia and so forth.

Al Bashir says Sudan keen to advance trade ties with Jordan

KHARTOUM (Petra) — Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir was one of many prominent personalities to visit the Jordanian wing of the International Trade Fair in Khartoum where the Kingdom is displaying a variety of national products.

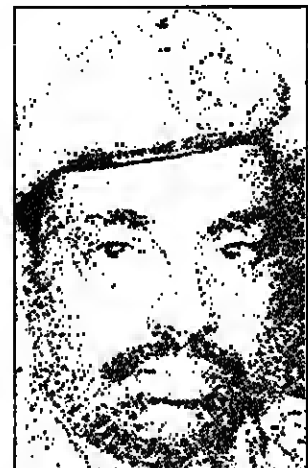
While touring the Jordanian wing, Mr. Bashir said he was impressed with the high quality of goods on display and added that his country was eager to promote Jordanian-Sudanese trade links.

Lending a hand at the fair, Bashar Khasawneh, the director of Commercial

Centres at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, said Jordan, which has taken part in the Khartoum fair for the last 13 years, is this year displaying products from 34 national companies.

He said 20 Arab and foreign countries are participating in the fair this year. The national products fair was opened last Monday and will last until Jan. 22.

During the visit of the Sudanese leader, Mr. Khasawneh presented him with a replica of the ancient city of Petra as a memento.



Omar Hassan Al Bashir

Population conference to start in Cairo

AMMAN (Petra) — A six-member Jordanian delegation, headed by Abdullah Abu Ata, president of the Executive Committee of the Arab Region Section at the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), and President of the Jordan Family Planning Society, Friday left for Cairo to take part in a three-day Arab international conference on population and development, which starts today. The conference brings together representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations, financing institutions and family planning societies for an exchange of experiences in the area of implementing recommendations of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The conference, which is organised by the IPPF, seeks to review points of convergence between the IPPF vision for the year 2000, and the ICPD's programme of action.

Government measures to help RJ expected

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government is expected to announce measures to relieve Royal Jordanian (RJ) of part of its debts, estimated at JD 450 million, RJ President Nader Dahabi was quoted as saying in Al Ra'i Arabic daily Thursday.

During a visit by His Majesty King Hussein to the Operations Department of Royal Jordanian (RJ) at Queen Alia International Airport Thursday, Mr. Dahabi outlined the airline's plans. The RJ chief said the government has intervened on the part of RJ and been in contact with its creditors to work out a debt rescheduling programme for the airline.



Nader Dahabi

other RJ officials who had exerted outstanding efforts in helping to save the national airline about JD 4 million in 1995.

In praising the RJ staff, the King said RJ has succeeded in competing with many world airlines.

During his visit, King Hussein met with President Dahabi and senior management and voiced his appreciation of their achievements in the training, maintenance and operations sectors.

Experts to join peace talks

(Continued from page 1)

And Syria's official press Friday ruled out the acceptance of "hasty" solutions or pressure from Israel for a peace settlement adding Mr. Christopher should wrest a commitment from Israel for a withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Senior Israeli peace negotiator Itamar Rabinovich, Foreign Minister Ehud Barak and Environment Minister Yossi Sarid all cast doubt over the secretary's efforts. Mr. Rabinovich said a breakthrough cannot be expected unless military officials and water specialists join the talks. "Water and security are questions of such importance that we must have experts to discuss them," he said.

Mr. Barak delivered a harsh assessment: "It is still too soon to say if we have a partner in Damascus for making peace" and Mr. Sarid dismissed altogether the possibility of reaching a peace agreement "or even a declaration" of principle with Syria this year.

Mr. Christopher said, however, the Maryland talks "have ushered in a new phase of the negotiations between Israel and Syria and created a new basis for genuine progress."

Mr. Assad's demand for Israel's withdrawal from every inch of the strategic

Golan Heights has never changed. Israel in return demands that Damascus first commit itself to full and normal relations.

This has been the bone of contention in talks which broke off last year for six months and resumed outside Washington in December.

Mr. Assad, displaying unprecedented optimism about peace with Israel, has praised Mr. Peres in recent weeks, saying he had shown signs of "greater Israeli flexibility."

Syria's official newspaper Tishreen said 1996 should be the year of peace.

"Peres is obsessed with the peace process and with clinching a deal not with Syria but with all the Gulf states. He perceives himself as a peacemaker and would like to retain this legacy by making comprehensive peace before the Israeli elections," one Israel-based Western diplomat said.

But what Mr. Peres needs to win the elections is not what Mr. Assad needs to maintain the confidence of the Syrian people and army, experts on Syrian affairs say.

Syrian public opinion has come round to the idea of peace in principle, provided Mr. Assad gets what he has demanded, they add.

Mr. Assad realises his peace with Israel would reward the Jewish state by allowing it into Arab markets through normal ties with all Arab states, including Gulf

countries rich in oil, they said. "He knows that when Syria makes peace with Israel a whole stage of history in the Middle East is over, that the map in the Middle East will change as a whole," one diplomat said.

For years Mr. Assad tried to block compromise with the West and the Jewish state, but the collapse of the Soviet Union, economic stagnation at home and Israel's peace agreements with Jordan and the Palestinians have undermined Syria's ability to hold out.

attempted to block the deployment. The commander-in-chief has been anxious to express solidarity with the troops he sent to the distant front lines in a deployment that has worried the public and angered the Republicans who took over Congress last year.

Mr. Clinton wanted to make the symbolic trip at Christmas but agreed to hold off until the deployment was well under way. The president will still be able to make the visit ahead of his key state of the union address on Jan. 23.

Focussing on his foreign policy many also bring relief to the president, who is facing intensifying scrutiny of political scandals which haunted his first national

NEWS IN BRIEF

Jordan to attend IFAD meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will take part in the two-day meetings of the International Fund For Agricultural Development (IFAD) board of governors, which will be held in Rome on Jan. 17. Participants will discuss the IFAD's proposed budget for 1996, elect a new executive board and endorse a \$13 million loan to Jordan, to be used for natural resources projects in Karak and Tafleh governorates. The Jordanian delegation will be headed by Ministry of Agriculture Secretary General Ghaleb Abu Orah.

Clinton hits campaign trail

(Continued from page 1)

election three years ago and a looming sexual harassment suit.

Though Mr. Clinton was to attend a fundraiser later in Nashville, he has yet to make an official announcement for his reelection bid in November. Thursday he coyly acknowledged this at his first formal press conference in five months when asked when he will throw his hat in the race.

"I think people know what my intentions are," he said, adding: "There'll be plenty of time for politics this year. I imagine that everybody will be glad when the next election's done."

Indeed, the crowded field of Republican contenders fanned out across the nation Friday, stumping in the early

primary states and preparing for a major debate Saturday in Iowa.

In his address, Mr. Clinton also reiterated his call for ending the protracted budget battle in Washington which has twice shut down the government and fighting out the underlying policy questions in the upcoming elections.

"Let us take what we can agree on and balance the budget... and put the differences off until you decide in November," Mr. Clinton told the factory workers.

The president was to leave later Friday for Bosnia, stopping in Italy and Hungary and wrapping up the trip in Croatia.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

* Water colours by several German artists at Goethe-Institut (until Jan. 21)

* Plastic (abstract) art exhibition by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Uttheina (until Feb. 6).

* Works by artist Raphael Chaproul at the French Cultural Centre (until Jan. 31).

CONCERT

A concert featuring the orchestra of the National Music Conservatory and the Jordanian Armed Forces music band at Philadelphia Hotel on Sunday at 8:00

p.m. (The programme includes L'Arlésienne by Bizet, Hungarian dances by Brahms, Die Fledermaus and Radetzky March by Strauss, Piano Concert No. 24 by Mozart, West Side Story by Bernstein and Stars and Stripes by Sousa).

LECTURES

* "The Upcoming Trends of the Jordanian Economy and How Promising They Are" (in Arabic) by Dr. Fahd Al Fanek at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

POETRY RECITAL

* Recital of poems by Palestinian poet Nazih Kheir at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art at 6:30 p.m.

Judge says ex-minister in 'dirty war' probe to stay free on bail

MADRID (AFP) — A supreme court judge ruled Friday that former Interior Minister Jose Barriouneo, implicated in the government's "dirty war" against Basque separatists, should remain free on a 15-million-peseta (\$125,000) bail, judicial sources said.

They described the move as a preventive measure to give the judge more time to determine on what charges to indict Mr. Barriouneo, who despite the scandal is still expected to run on the Socialist list in early elections on March 3.

The state prosecutor Thursday had asked Judge Eduardo Moner to put Mr. Barriouneo in jail.

But the judge had been expected to set bail instead

while investigations continue into allegations about the so-called GAL hit squads blamed for killing at least 22 Basque separatists during the 1980s, some across the border in France.

Mr. Barriouneo has denied any involvement in GAL, which stands for anti-terrorist liberation groups, as the scandal has crept deep into the corridors of power and brought suspicion upon Socialist Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez himself.

The GAL case has combined with a spate of corruption scandals to undermine Mr. Gonzalez' hold on power and force him to call early elections which he is expected to lose to the right.

Mr. Barriouneo, who

was interior minister from 1982 to 1988, has had his passport confiscated, is barred from leaving the country and must report to the court twice a month.

He has blasted the measures as "exaggerated", saying he had done nothing wrong and had always "defended constitutional values" to ensure "less cruelty and less violence" in Spain.

But attorneys for the plaintiffs urged Mr. Moner last week to indict Mr. Barriouneo on charges of illegal detention, setting up armed bands and embezzling, saying that recent testimony "fully shows" that he is guilty.

A former Socialist Party leader, Ricardo Garcia

Damborenea who is also free on bail, clashed with Mr. Barriouneo in testimony before the supreme court last week, accusing the former minister of participating in GAL and citing a meeting of party members near Madrid in 1983 when he said Mr. Barriouneo had spoken out in support of a "dirty war" against the Basque terrorist group ETA.

Similar testimony against Mr. Barriouneo was also made in December by a former police chief, Francisco Alvarez, and the former head of the state security organisation, Julian Sancristobal, who are also being prosecuted.

Japan's new premier vows firm ties with the U.S.

TOKYO (AFP) — Ryutaro Hashimoto, Japan's new prime minister, pledged Friday to maintain firm ties with the United States despite nagging problems over military bases, while ruling out early general elections at home.

"In the past as now I believe the most important diplomatic ties for Japan are relations with the United States," Mr. Hashimoto told a news conference the day after he was elected prime minister.

"In order to stabilise that relationship we must firmly maintain the U.S.-Japan security treaty."

He said stable Japan-U.S. ties were also "what the world wants," noting that many countries had been worried about possible deterioration of the relationship during auto trade disputes, which he, as trade minister, settled with U.S. trade representative Mickey Kantor last year.

Tokyo's relationship with Washington has been under pressure following the rape of a 12-year-old girl in Okinawa, allegedly by U.S. servicemen, which has led to strident calls for a reduction of the U.S. military presence in Japan.

The premier said his government would proceed with talks with the United States for "reduction and consolidation" of U.S. bases in Okinawa, but it would be under the framework of the current bilateral security arrangement.

Mr. Hashimoto said he had briefly talked about the Okinawa issue in a telephone conversation with U.S. President Bill Clinton earlier in the day.

"I want to seek a judgement that both countries can agree, while paying heed to the hearts of the Okinawans," he said.

Mr. Hashimoto also said he would meet Okinawa Governor Masahide Ota "as soon as possible" to discuss objections to renewal of U.S. base leases in the southern island prefecture and calls for their reduction.

"I will promise as much effort as we can offer, but I would like to get the understanding of the prefecture," Mr. Hashimoto said.

Previous Prime Minister



Ryutaro Hashimoto

Mr. Ota to court to force Okinawan landowners to renew the U.S. base leases.

"I hope for a prompt legal judgement that is acceptable to the two countries and pay due attention to the Okinawan people's feelings," Mr. Hashimoto said.

On the domestic front, Mr. Hashimoto said his administration would seek early passage of budget bills by the March 31 end of the current fiscal year so there would be no "disruption" in the government's economic measures.

His government would also focus on pushing ahead with economic recovery measures, deregulation, creation of new industries and financial stability through early resolution of the housing loan companies' debt problems.

He called the new administration "a cabinet of reform and creation," stressing the need for sweeping structural reforms in the country.

"Fifty years after the war's end, various systems are requiring changes. I think we must promote drastic reforms in many areas including politics, economy and society," he said.

He also said his cabinet was a "pragmatic one, with executive power" to deal with issues needing urgent attention, particularly in the areas of economy, including the recovery of confidence in Japan's battered financial system.

On growing calls for an early general election, Mr. Hashimoto said he did not want to create a "political vacuum" at a time when Japan's economy was still stagnating.

"For the moment, we have to put all our energy into pending issues like the economy and Okinawa. It's not time yet to talk about (general elections)."

Mr. Hashimoto, president of the powerful Liberal Democratic Party, said it was only natural for a political party to seek a monopoly rule of the government to achieve their ideals, but vowed to maintain for now the three-party coalition with the Social Democratic Party and the new party Sakigake.

He said parties that can agree on policy measures should form coalition when no political party can win majority support from the public.

Sri Lanka gears for another anti-Tiger show down

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lankan security forces are preparing for another major assault on separatist Tamil Tiger guerrillas to blunt a wave of rebel attacks in the east of the country, defence sources said Friday.

Elite army units are being moved into the eastern coastal district of Batticaloa to attack jungle bases of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte in parliament Thursday predicted that security forces would soon neutralise the guerrillas in the eastern province where some 50 people have died in sporadic violence since the New Year.

"We don't want to just protect a village here and there when the terrorists strike," Mr. Ratwatte said. "What we are trying to do is protect the integrity of the nation... We want to destroy the terrorists."

He said the government was keen to defeat the LTTE militarily and to press ahead with a political settlement of the ethnic conflict which has claimed more than 50,000 lives over the past 23 years.

Defence sources said the upsurge in rebel attacks in the east came after the guerrillas lost their main citadel of Jaffna in the north of the

island to security forces last month.

The army captured Jaffna, capital of a de facto state the LTTE had run since 1990, after nearly 50 days of fighting that claimed the lives of 500 soldiers and an estimated 2,000 rebels.

Since then the LTTE has sabotaged dozens of power transformers, a telephone exchange and killed officials in the eastern province, causing unrest in the region which the rebels also claim as part of their homeland.

The LTTE has also killed about 25 members of rival Tamil groups as well as suspected police informants in the Batticaloa and neighbouring Trincomalee districts where Tigers have reestablished jungle bases. Chief military spokesman Sarath Munasinghe said the LTTE had escalated attacks to project a larger than life presence in the eastern province.

The government withdrew a large number of troops and dismantled several camps in the Batticaloa region to reinforce the assault on Jaffna.

This gave the LTTE the opportunity to take over vast stretches of territory and restrict army movements in the area.

"The army seems unable

to fight in the east and the north at the same time because they don't have enough men and equipment," said a retired military officer. "Now the time is right to shift the attention back to the east."

Minister Ratwatte, who led the army's campaign against the LTTE in Jaffna, said that there had been no drop in guerrilla violence in the past month across the island's embattled north east.

Defence sources said plans were also under way to mount another offensive to secure a land route to Jaffna which is currently supplied entirely by the air force and the navy.

Although the army is in control of Jaffna the guerrillas still control many main roads in the peninsula.

Defence sources said 10,000 new recruits will be absorbed into service by February giving the army more flexibility to bold territory taken from the Tigers and conduct new operations.

The LTTE is leading a protracted campaign for an independent state called Eelam in the island's northern and eastern regions where the two million Tamil minority is concentrated.

Soares scores diplomatic points with first visit to Angola

LUANDA (AFP) — With his first and only official visit to Angola which took place this week, Mario Soares sought to turn the page on 10 years of acrimonious relations between Portugal and its former African colony, and he was to some extent successful.

Mr. Soares, who is due to step down in March, left here Thursday at the end of a four-day visit which was hailed as a personal triumph for the veteran Socialist leader.

He instilled a new momentum into dialogue between Luanda and Lisbon after the distrust which marked the long period of civil war in Angola between the former Marxist government and the UNITA rebel movement.

Angola always viewed Mr. Soares as "too close" to Jonas Savimbi, the UNITA leader, but during his visit the Portuguese president said clearly that Portugal wanted to help "Angola and the Angolans, all the Angolans without discrimination and without taking sides in internal matters".

Mr. Soares made a fervent appeal for national reconciliation in Angola after almost two decades of civil war. In an allusion to a peace protocol signed in Lusaka in October 1994, he said Angola "must not miss this opportunity for peace".

"The Lusaka accords... gave Angola a unique opportunity which cannot and must not be spoiled because it will be difficult to achieve again," Mr. Soares said, in a reference to problems which have repeatedly impeded implementation of the accords.

The welcome given Mr. Soares on his arrival Monday was formal rather than warm and there were no crowds to applaud the Portuguese leader along the road from the airport.

Nevertheless, he quickly succeeded in creating a climate of détente and was careful to emphasise his country's "neutrality" in Angolan affairs.

Mr. Soares was the first foreign head of state to talk to a UNITA delegation which travelled to Luanda to see him, but he declined an invitation to visit Mr. Davimbi at the UNITA leader's headquarters in Bailundo in central Angola, saying he wished to avoid giving the impression that there were "two Angolas".

Mr. Savimbi refused to come to Luanda to meet Mr. Soares, invoking security concerns.

In a speech to parliament, Mr. Soares paid a warm tribute to "all the Angolans who died fighting for the independence" of their country.

Guerrillas moving Kashmir hostages towards Pakistan

SRINAGAR, India (R) — Four western tourists held hostage for six months have been moved out of the Kashmir Valley towards Pakistan, an intelligence source said Friday.

The source said Al-Faran guerrillas holding the hostages had moved them one by one over the Pir Panjal Mountain range towards the Pakistani frontier over the past few days.

He said the hostages had been sighted across the range in the Gool area, nearer to the border with Pakistan: "They are in good health and have warm clothes on," the source said.

Two weeks ago the hostages — two Britons, an American and a German — were spotted near Pulwama town in the centre of the Kashmir Valley.

The journey from Pulwama to Gool is a difficult and dangerous one in the Kashmir winter, crossing the Pir Panjal range whose peaks soar to 4,500 metres and where temperatures are below freezing.

South of Pulwama, Gool is at a lower altitude and warmer. The valley surrounding Gool leads downhill in a southwesterly direction towards Pakistan.

There was no immediate indication why the shadowy Al-Faran guerrillas had moved closer to

But the group is thought to include fighters from the one-third of Kashmir which Pakistan controls.

Pakistan-administered Kashmir would be an obvious avenue of escape for the guerrillas if they wished to end the standoff. India accuses Pakistan of arming and training guerrillas who have been fighting a six-year separatist insurgency in Kashmir.

Pakistan, which has fought two of its three wars with India over the region, says it only provides moral support.

The hostages, Britons Paul Wells and Keith Mangan, American Donald Hutches and Dirk Haset of Germany, were kidnapped last July while trekking through the Himalayan Mountains in Pahalgam, 120 km south of Srinagar.

A fifth hostage, Norwegian Hans Christian Ostroe, was held beheaded in the foothills near Pahalgam on August 13.

After kidnapping the tourists, Al-Faran demanded that India release some 15 jailed separatists including three Pakistanis.

India refused the bargain and has ruled out a rescue raid for fear of endangering the hostages.

More recently Al-Faran called British High Commissioner Nicholas Fenn to ask for a ransom. A British diplomat

An Indian official said Friday the authorities had started fresh efforts to secure the release of the hostages.

"Though the government has no contact with the captors, we have started fresh efforts for the safe release of the four hostages," the official, a negotiator in the crisis, told Reuters. He declined to give any details.

"We are mounting pressure on the captors through different means for the release of the four Westerners, but there will be no rescue operations," K. B. Jandial, spokesman for the government of Jammu and Kashmir state, told Reuters.

The all parties Hurriyat (freedom) conference, a coalition of 30 Kashmiri political and religious parties and groups, renewed its appeal to the guerrillas to release the hostages.

"We again appeal to captors to release all four hostages unconditionally as a goodwill gesture on the eve of the holy month of Ramadan," Hurriyat Chairman Omar Farooq said.

"If the hostage takers are true Muslims, they should release the four Western guests immediately to keep the sanctity of the holy month of Ramadan," he said.

Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, begins next week.

Japanese imperial family reads new year poems

TOKYO (AFP) — The Japanese imperial family released their new year poems Friday, an ancient tradition, with Emperor Akihito in his poem remembering those who tried to revive war-torn mountain forests.

In a solemn ceremony at the imperial palace here, which dates back to the eighth century, specialists read aloud poems written by members of the imperial household as well as commoners, all on the theme of "nae," a Japanese word for saplings.

The poems to the public were selected from 19,318 entries. "My thoughts go out to the people who, years after war was over, where mountains were laid waste had planted them with saplings," the emperor's poem was translated, saying. The imperial household agency said the poem was a reference, the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

"those people who, under the adverse conditions of the postwar period, steadily planted saplings in mountains that had been ravaged by indiscriminate deforestation during and after the war," Empress Michiko's poem gave overlapping images of rice paddies across Japanese islands and her husband looking after his own rice field in the imperial palace ground.

"Japan's chain of islands — young green shoots in every paddy must now be waving in the wind while today, his majesty too, is out tending his rice field," her poem read.

4 foreign doctors win awards for family planning

BANGKOK (AFP) — Four foreign doctors have been awarded Thailand's Prince Mahidol awards for 1989 for devoting themselves to helping society through family planning.

Foreign Minister Kasem Samosorn Kasemsri announced. Egon Dieckhoff, professor emeritus of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, and Carl Dieckhoff, professor of organic chemistry at Stanford University in California, were given the medical science award.

Mr. Kasem said in a statement received Friday, Frederick Sai of Ghana, president of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and Nafis Sadik, executive director of the United Nations Population Fund, were given the public health award, he said.

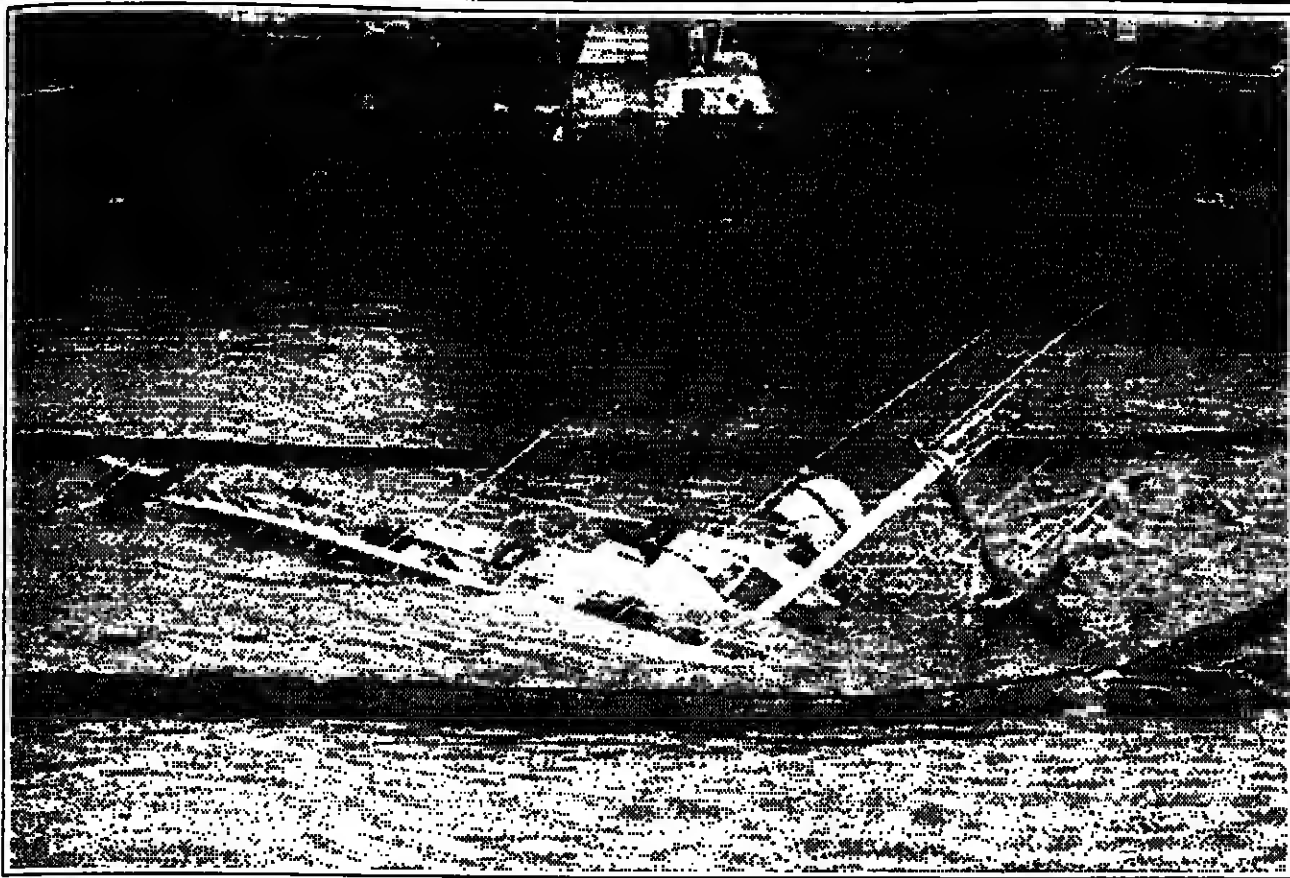
Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn is to confer the awards, which carry \$50,000 cash prizes, in ceremony at the Ananda Samakhom throne hall on Jan. 31. The awards are named after Prince Mahidol of Songkla, Harvard-educated doctor who was the father of King Bhumibol Adulyadej. The prince devoted himself to helping people and is known as the father of the medicine and public health.

This is the fourth year the Prince Mahidol Foundation has given the awards.

'Hong Kong is one of the safest cities'

HONG KONG (AFP) — The number of reported crimes in Hong Kong last year increased 4.6 per cent from 1994 to 91,886 cases in 1995 but it remains one of the safest cities in the world, its chief of police has said. Police Commissioner Eddie Hui Ki-O told a press conference that increase was mainly made up of woundings, various thefts and narcotics cases.

With crime detection rate remaining steady at 52 per cent, "Hong Kong remains one of the world's safest cities," said Mr. Hui. He said violent crime decreased last year, especially robberies involving firearms, which dropped significantly by 35.7 per cent.



French oceanographer Jacques Cousteau's ship, the Calypso, lies in muddy water in a Singapore shipyard (AFP photo)

Divers inspect sunken Cousteau vessel, shipyard maintains silence

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Divers Friday inspected French oceanographer Jacques-Yves Cousteau's sunken vessel, the Calypso, at a Singapore shipyard prior to salvage operations, witnesses said.

The unidentified divers, accompanied by a video and photographic team, rode a rubber dinghy to the famous wooden-hulled vessel, now lying on its side in shallow waters where it sank Monday after being accidentally rammed by another vessel.

An AFP photographer was not allowed to go near them and officials at the shipyard of the Kwong Soon Engineering Co. Pte. Ltd., where the ageing vessel had been berthed for 16 months, remained tight-lipped.

Shipping sources said insurance matters were still being sorted out. The Port of Singapore Authority was monitoring the case but had not yet stepped in, they added.

Singapore television said three officials from the Cousteau Society in France — a marine biologist, an oceanographer and a marine inspector — had arrived in Singapore to look into salvage operations.

They could not be reached for comment.

There are plans to refloat the ship and fetter it to an unnamed port. Mr. Cousteau had long planned to replace the vessel and had been raising funds to build an ultramodern version to be called Calypso II.

The Cousteau Society said the Calypso sank after being accidentally boled by another vessel at the shipyard, where it had been stationed since September 1994 after returning from a mission to China and Vietnam.

The highly-decorated Cousteau, 85, had used the Calypso to ply the oceans in a career dedicated to marine conservation.

The vessel, a converted British minesweeper used by Mr. Cousteau for over four decades, had used Singapore as a base in between missions.

Mr. Cousteau founded the undersea research group of the French navy in 1945 and five years later became commander of the Calypso. He is known for such films as the "The silent world" and "The living sea."

He also helped develop the aqualung breathing device for divers.

Tanzanian army will not tolerate incursions — commander

DAR ES SALAAM (AFP) — Tanzania's army will no longer tolerate incursions by Burundian troops on the pretext of pursuing rebels, its commander, General Robert Mbona, warned on the border.

"Burundi's armed forces must stop wounding Tanzanians in skirmishes with rebel groups going on near the border as Tanzanian armed forces will not tolerate the incidents for much longer," Gen. Mbona said during a visit to the Kagunga border post in the western Kigoma region bordering Burundi, the Guardian newspaper reported Friday.

He sounded the warning after being given a list of

Tanzanian villagers wounded by Burundian soldiers and meeting residents and soldiers guarding the area.

According to the army chief, Tanzania spends at least \$380,000 a month to repulse would-be refugees, mostly from Burundi.

Tanzania, which hosts some 700,000 refugees, closed its border with Burundi early last year to prevent a fresh inflow from that unstable central African state.

The government has complained of the increasing burden of hosting the refugees, and Gen. Mbona said more money would have to be spent on them over the next few months because various aid organi-

sations were cutting back on their assistance.

President Benjamin Mkapa, who took office last month, has already made it clear to presidents Sylvester Nibantunganya of Burundi and Pasteur Bizimungu of Rwanda that his government wants the refugees to return home as soon as possible.

"We will not entertain the idea of having permanent refugees in Tanzania. They must go home... The governments of Burundi and Rwanda must create a conducive atmosphere for their return and settlement," he said after separate meetings with the two presidents late last month.

Bhutto party sees victory in by-election

KARACHI (AFP) — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's party was heading for a landslide victory Friday in a by-election in a key southern province, as the opposition accused the government of rigging the poll.

Unofficial counting of ballots in voting Thursday for the national assembly seat at Sanghar, a district in Sindh province, some 500 kilometres northeast of here, showed an overwhelming lead by a candidate from the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Fida Hussain Dero.

The opposition Pakistan Muslim League (PML) announced halfway through the vote Thursday that it was boycotting the election, charging the government with massive rigging, stuffing of ballot boxes and voter intimidation.

Senator Ishmael Azhar of the ethnic-based Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) also accused the government of manipulating the voting and said over 50 MQM workers had been arrested during the polling. The MQM was supporting the PML candidate.

"They (the PPP) had a good opportunity to build up their credibility with Thursday's election," said PML leader Haleem Siddiqui. "Now no-one can trust them to hold even a mid-term election."

Chun indicted for taking millions in bribes from businessmen

SEOUL (AFP) — Former South Korean President Chun Doo-hwan was indicted here Friday on corruption charges related to a huge \$910 million slush fund amassed while in office from 1980 to 1988, prosecutors said.

"We have indicted former President Chun Doo-hwan for receiving \$280 million in bribes from 42 of the country's businessmen," Lee Joog-Chan, a senior prosecutor, said in a nationally-televised announcement. But the businessmen implicated in Mr. Chun's fund were not charged because the statute of limitations on their alleged crimes had expired, prosecutors said.

The prosecution served the indictment while Mr. Chun, 64, was in Seoul Police Hospital recovering from a 27-day fast to protest his imprisonment on Dec. 3 on charges linked to the 1979 coup that brought him to power.

It made Mr. Chun, whom doctors said reacted with gloom and "silence" to the news, the second former head of state to be indicted for massive corruption

within two months.

His successor and former military classmate, Roh Tae-woo, was jailed on bribery charges in November in connection with a \$650 million slush fund.

Between them, the two are alleged to have milked more than \$1.5 billion from businessmen in 13 years.

On top of the \$910 million, Mr. Chun received \$325 million in contributions to government foundations, prosecutors said, adding that they had traced \$130 millions held by Mr. Chun in real estate and financial assets.

Mr. Chun had shredded all financial records connected with the slush fund before being arrested, prosecutor Kim Sung-Ho told reporters later.

A Police Hospital doctor said "Mr. Chun remained silent all day long and looked displeased after learning that he was formally indicted," while the politicians expressed amazement at the enormity of the slush fund.

"We are astonished by the astronomical amount ... Chun should be strictly pun-

ished," said Park Jie-Won, a spokesman of the main opposition party, National Congress for New Politics (NCNP).

The NCNP also repeated a long-standing demand that President Kim Young-Sam reveal the source of his 1992 election campaign funding, some of which they allege came from Mr. Roh and Mr. Chun.

The president's New Korea Party said there should be no mercy for Mr. Chun.

Indicted with Mr. Chun were five confidantes, charged with acting as middlemen between the business conglomerates and the former head of state and with helping him amass the slush fund.

Of the five indicted, three face trial without physical detention — his former chief economic adviser, Sagong Il, the former head of National Security Board, Ahn Moo-Hyuk, and the former chief of bank supervisory board, Lee Won-Jo.

The two others, Mr. Chun's former security service head Ahn Hyun-Tae and former tax administration chief Sung Yong-

Wook, were arrested Wednesday.

The conglomerates named in the Chun indictment included the country's top business groups such as Samsung, Daewoo and Dong-Ah, whose heads were indicted without detention in the Roh case.

Mr. Roh is currently on trial, with seven top business leaders, charged with raising \$370 million in bribes from businessmen during his tenure from 1988 to 1993.

When he left office in 1988 after violent pro-democracy demonstrations, Mr. Chun was hounded into internal exile for two years in a remote Buddhist monastery with his wife.

At the time, he turned \$18 million of "political funds" over to the state, stating that he would be to blame if any more hidden assets were found.

Mr. Roh and Mr. Chun also face indictment on charges of masterminding the 1980 massacre of civilians by martial law troops in the southern city of Kwangju.

U.S. senator calls on North Korea to reduce tensions with South

SEOUL (AFP) — Visiting U.S. Senator Sam Nunn Friday said emergency rice aid to North Korea should be conditional on North Korean efforts to reduce tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

"Any form of economic assistance and cooperation will be difficult unless we see clear signs that North Korea reduces tension and danger (on the Korean peninsula)," said Mr. Nunn, ranking minority member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, at a pre-departure press conference after a three-day visit.

Mr. Nunn called North Korea's food shortages a "real problem" but said they were caused by structural problems exacerbated by a series of devastating floods, and could not be solved with a single injection of emergency aid.

But if the North chooses commitment (to reduced tensions), the United States and South Korea would be prepared to coordinate efforts to ease the North's dire food problems, he said.

A tripartite assistant vice-ministerial meeting among South Korea, the United States and Japan, slated for Jan. 25 in Hawaii, would offer an important opportunity to planning for any such aid, he said.

"We need a long-range, comprehensive plan in terms of economic approach to North Korea," Mr. Nunn said.

The three countries, he said, would discuss a broad range of issues as well as relief rice aid to North Korea, where the United Nations say up to two million children face starvation this winter and spring.

Mr. Nunn also stressed that South Korea and the 37,000 U.S. military forces based here posed no threat to the North.

Other items to be discussed in Hawaii include a possible reduction of the size of the huge standing armies on the peninsula, possible North-South prior notification of military exercises, the establishment of crisis prevention centre and the issue of chemical and biological weapons.

Pakistani suspects freed in the Philippines

MANILA (AFP) — Four Pakistanis arrested in the Philippines last month on suspicion of being Islamic terrorists have been freed after police failed to present evidence against them, the bureau of immigration said Friday.

Ishfaq Ahmed Khan, Mohammad Ahmad Khan, Imtiaz Mohammad Yamin and Mohammad Mubin Khan had been among 35 south Asian and Middle Eastern suspects arrested since December in an ongoing campaign against foreign extremist groups allegedly operating here.

Five of the suspects have been charged in court with illegal possession of explosives.

But the four Pakistanis were released from the bureau's jail Thursday after the Philippine National Police advised the agency that "there was no legal basis to file criminal charges" against them.

Commissioner Leandro Verceles told reporters. The four were picked up by police in the Ermita tourist district here on Dec. 20 in an ongoing operation against alleged Islamic terrorists who plotted to assassinate President Fidel Ramos, Pope John Paul II and other officials.

"Our verification of their passports showed that they were properly admitted, that their visas are still valid and that their names do not appear in our derogatory list," Mr. Verceles said.

The anti-terrorist campaign suffered another setback Friday when Manila newspapers published allegations that high-ranking police officials had planted incriminating evidence against some of the 35 suspects.

The charges were made by former Filipino Muslim Mr. Angeles did not specify what evidence was allegedly planted against the suspects, five of whom have been charged with illegal possession of explosives.

Mr. Angeles agreed to help the military last year and confirmed links

between the Abu Sayyaf, which is engaged in bombings and kidnappings in the southern Philippines, with a foreign group headed by U.S. World Trade Center bombing suspect, Ramzi Yusef.

Mr. Angeles denied that those arrested in recent weeks were terrorists. "The real terrorists are still at large," he said.

He cited the case of one of those arrested, Mohammad Anoes, who was mistaken for Abdul Hakim Majid, Yusef's accomplice in a plot to assassinate the Pope during his visit here a year ago.

Mr. Angeles also cited Adel Annon, who owns a Manila meat shop. He was arrested "simply because he was the brother of Ramzi Yusef," he said.

He added he was ordered by police of the intelligence command to buy firearms and explosives from "sources outside the police and military" that would be used as evidence against the foreigners.

Mr. Sarmiento denied Mr. Angeles' charges, but said he would "not hesitate to punish" any police found to have used planted evidence to arrest the 35 suspects.

National Police spokesman senior Superintendent Arturo Lomibao said Mr. Angeles' allegations may be intended to "enhance his popularity" to increase the money he has been offered from a movie studio that is bidding to buy the rights to his story.

Lawyers for the detainees and government critics have previously claimed that the alleged terror plot was a government ploy. But President Fidel Ramos Wednesday asserted that the threat was real.

Burmese troops regrouping for attacks on Karenni rebels

BANGKOK (AFP) — Government troops attacking a key position held by ethnic Karenni rebels in eastern Burma have withdrawn in preparation for a fresh assault, a Karenni source said Friday.

The situation around Rambo Hill, adjacent to the Thai province of Mae Hong Son, was reported to be calm as Burmese troops regrouped for another attack after unsuccessful attempts over the past week, the source said.

He denied reports the hill, about six kilometres from the Thai border in the eastern state of Kayah, had fallen to Burmese troops, who

he said had sustained casualties in repeated assaults on the Karenni position.

The source did not give casualty figures for either side, but a Karenni statement said Monday that 10 Burmese had been killed in attacks on Rambo hill.

The hill was named for a Karenni guerrilla who distinguished himself fighting Burmese forces in the area, for which he was dubbed "Rambo," after the one-man army movie character played by Sylvester Stallone, the source said.

The source, speaking by telephone from Mae Hong Son, said that some 1,000 Burmese troops were

preparing to move into Karenni-held areas of the remote state. He put the current Burmese troop level at 3,600 men statewide.

He has estimated that the Karenni have only some 1,000 men under arms.

"The situation is critical because now is the dry season and the time for SLORC to launch attacks," he said, referring to the State Law and Order Restoration Council, as the Burmese junta is officially known.

The Karenni say Burmese troops have terrorised people in rebel areas, burning houses and crops.

Police killing of 10-year-old girl sparks outrage in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE (AFP) — The killing of a 10-year-old girl as police opened fire to clamp down on a demonstration was drawing outrage Friday from the public and the Roman Catholic Church.

Two days after the girl's killing during the protest in l'Estere, north of the capital, the church's local justice and peace commission Friday formally protested the tragedy. Three other people were injured by

police gunfire in the incident.

Father Daniel Roussiere called for swift legal action and for prompt payment of reparation to the victim's family.

The protesters had been blocking Haiti's main north-south highway over the lack of electricity which was making water pumping needed to irrigate rice crops impossible in the region.

Prime Minister Claudene Werleigh said after the

killing that one of the policemen involved had been arrested.

National Police spokesman Herold Israel said Thursday the demonstrators had taken hostage six policemen during the violent incident and that three other officers were injured.

He also said officers had been ordered not to use firearms at demonstrations, and only to use their service weapons when their lives

were in danger.

Tuesday two employees of the state electricity of Haiti were injured by participants in a demonstration outside a heating plant in the town of Gonaives, 153 kilometres northwest of the capital, in protest over lack of electricity.

Haiti is suffering from low electrical supplies due to the dry winter season, which reduces much of the country's hydroelectric power.

Mbeki to visit Christmas day massacre site

PRETORIA (AFP) — South Africa's Deputy President Thabo Mbeki is to pay another visit Sunday to the shobashobane village in Kwazulu-Natal where 19 people were killed in last year's Christmas day massacre.

A spokesman for Mr. Mbeki's office said the deputy president would arrive in the area shortly before midday and spend the afternoon with the local people. He would be accompanied by safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufumadi and Deputy Minister Joe Ntshihla.

"His visit will send a very strong message that violence will no longer be tolerated in the province," the spokesman said.

The Kwazulu-Natal province on the eastern side of the country has been a battlefield where supporters of the African National Congress and the Zulu based Inkatha Freedom Party have been involved in violent clashes over the past ten years.

The conflict has recently intensified in the southern coastal areas where the Christmas day massacre occurred. About 600 armed men rampaged through the

rural settlement of Shobashobane, attacking the locals in broad daylight.

Among the victims of the massacre was ANC supporter Kipha Nyawosa who lost 14 family members of his family in previous attacks on the village.

Mr. Mbeki visited the area the day after the massacre and then attended the funeral for the victims on Jan. 6. Mr. Mbeki's spokesman said the purpose of the visit was also to assure locals that the government would not allow people to be forced out of their living areas by threats and intimidation.

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The King in Tel Aviv

ARABIC HEADLINES welcoming His Majesty King Hussein to Tel Aviv spanned the front pages of the Israeli press. Israeli officials were conspicuously euphoric about the visit. And so were the Israeli people. Thousands of men, women and children lined the streets as the King's motorcade passed through the streets of Tel Aviv-Haifa. Their hands carried Jordanian and Israeli flags. Their words were of welcome. The message: We love the King; we trust him.

These sentiments have — or should have — implications that go beyond those of a people who have special feelings for a leader of a neighbouring country. They can be a significant asset in pushing the drive for comprehensive peace in the Middle East forward.

The simple reality is that the Arabs have lost the war with Israel. Through the decades of military approach to the conflict with the Jewish state, the Arabs won back nothing of their usurped rights. Israel was simply stronger. It could win the war. And in war there is only one result: some lose; and some win.

But there can be more than one winner in the joint struggle for peace. The struggle is launched through pragmatic approaches that are sensitive to the constraints of reality. Compromise and concessions are what get this process moving.

The question is why should anybody compromise on something that they believe is theirs. The answer is to gain something more valuable than that which has been forsaken.

In the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, peace is the reward that will be gained from compromise. The need for peace is mutual. The Arabs need it; the Israelis need it even more.

The conflict with Israel is still far from over. Peace cannot prevail before Israel withdraws from Arab lands it still occupies; before it stops to torture and imprison Arab people and deprive them of their right to a decent and dignified life; and before it clearly demonstrates that it wants to live and let live, with its future policies geared towards a genuine desire for peace rather than being a reflection of the fake sense of security that its military power seems to provide.

The Israelis have to fulfil these requirements in order to get the Arabs to accept them; and the Arabs have to convince the Israelis of the viability of peace in order to encourage them to do what it takes to win the Arabs' confidence.

The popularity of the King among Israelis can play a significant role in this regard. This popularity should be capitalised on not just by Jordanians, but by the rest of the Arabs as well.

The impression that one got from the display of warm feelings by the Israelis to the King is that His Majesty is a man with whom the Israelis can do business, that he is a man whose word they trust and whose judgement they value. The weight that King Hussein carries with the Israelis is unmatched by any other Arab leader. This weight can only help the Arabs in their endeavours to regain their rights. Palestinians can and should rely on the King's good office as they negotiate with the Israelis. So can and should the Syrians. The King's commitment to the Arabs and their rights has been demonstrated in unquestionable terms: his ability to help attain these rights has been proven in no less clear way.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily hailed His Majesty King Hussein's visit to Israel on Wednesday as a first step towards a new era marked by serious efforts for the building of peace between Jordan and the Jewish state. The visit was one more station in the peace process and came to further corroborate the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, whose provisions are being implemented for the interests of the two peoples, said the paper. The extent of the enthusiastic welcome accorded to King Hussein during this visit, said the paper, reflected the genuine yearning of the Israeli people towards living in peace and building peace with Jordan to benefit the future generations. The welcome also expressed Israel's deep appreciation of the King's efforts to bring about a comprehensive peace to the region that has been plagued by conflicts for many decades, added the paper. According to the daily, the peace between Israel and Jordan should serve as a model to be copied on the other Arab-Israeli tracks because it is a peace that guarantees coexistence and one that has secured the return of all the occupied Jordanian lands to the Kingdom. It said the Jordan-Israel peace was not only needed for the peoples of the two countries but rather for the whole Arab region.

Jordanian Perspective

Leader with a vision

By Dr. Musa Keilani

THE SUCCESSFUL visit of His Majesty King Hussein to Israel on Wednesday was indeed a landmark in Jordanian-Israeli relations after the signing of the peace treaty between the two countries more than one year ago. Beyond that, however, the visit was a resounding reaffirmation of the forward-looking vision of the King as a leader whose guidance has been the pivotal factor in taking up Jordanians' major steps ahead of developments which otherwise would have impeded our march.

The very survival of Jordan, a small country amid giants in a region where political stability has been hard to come by, and the Kingdom's emergence as a key regional player over the decades speak volumes for the wisdom of the King, whose decisions have always met the requirements of the age far ahead of time.

It is only a matter of time before an overwhelming majority of the Arab states would seek political and interaction with the State of Israel after decades of conflict, but Jordan has set an example for the nature of that interaction after signing peace with Israel.

Of course, the Jordanian-Israeli interaction did not come out of a vacuum. It came after Israel showed that it was willing to accommodate the political requirements of peace with the Arabs and was ready to do what it would take to be accepted and integrated as a member of the Middle Eastern order. It is a gradual process that would take some time, but King Hussein, anticipating the change in the region years ahead of others, moved

fast to serve Jordanian interests by placing Jordan and Jordanians in the most effective position to lead the change by establishing a warm and cordial relationship with Israel.

Notwithstanding the narrowminded assertions and claims of critics of peace, common Jordanian-Israeli interests are not confined to water or tourism or the elements outlined in the peace treaty. The requirements of the strategic objectives of both countries warrant much closer interaction and the King, in his visit to Israel, reaffirmed that Jordan had understood this concept far ahead of its fellow members in the Arab League.

It is safe to say that in 10 years time, the winds of change brought in by political globalisation would sweep cardboard entities throughout the world, including the Middle East.

As far as Jordan is concerned, the requirement of today, and indeed of tomorrow, is close interaction with Israel, and this was exemplified in the Kingdom's move to make peace with Israel and then to consolidate relations with the Jewish state.

King Hussein has placed Jordan in a position not only to be conducive to the demands of change but also to be able to lead change by undertaking timely political action. Peace with Israel was one of the key elements of such political action, and over and above such a move, Jordan is determined to consolidate

economic, cultural and social interaction with Israel.

Critics of peace may not agree with this perception, but it is only a matter of time before they would stand corrected. So would those who seem to specialise in deception and procrastination without apparently realising that if they do not accept the inevitability of political change brought in by political globalisation, then change would be imposed on them whether they like it or not. History has proved it so.

The warmth of the welcome that King Hussein received in Israel, more significantly from the Israeli people who lined up the streets to cheer His Majesty, was moving. It is highly unlikely that any Arab leader who has either made peace with Israel or is in the process of doing so would ever receive such warmth from Israelis.

The Israelis who waved Jordanian and Israeli flags as the King drove by were not brought there by the Israeli government; they were there by their own choice and will and wanted to show their affection and appreciation for King Hussein not only as leader of Jordan which has made peace with Israel but also as an Arab and world leader whose vision is not narrowed down to the immediate political interests of the day but to a future that bodes well for the interests of the people of Jordan and Israel as well as the rest of the region if they are ready and willing to live up to the demands of change.

Sino-British ties thaw but much remains to be done

By Benjamin Kang Lim
Reuters

BELING — British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind's visit to China this week is part of a thaw in ties but diplomats said real advances in accord on details of Hong Kong's handover would depend on what action is taken.

Mr. Rifkind's three-day visit to Beijing ending on Thursday extended the thaw in Sino-British relations resulting from a visit by his Chinese counterpart, Qian Qichen, to London last October, Western diplomats said on Friday.

Mr. Rifkind Reached agreement in his talks with China's leaders on issues ranging from air services and the right of abode in Hong Kong after the colony's handover to China to progress on a decision on the award of a container terminal contract.

But some were sceptical of the agreements. "Already there are signs that China may be rolling back from what was agreed in the meetings," one diplomat said, noting that the Chinese were saying achievements need to be hammered out in the joint liaison group.

China's stand on issues of contention was expected to prevail in the 18 months before the handover at midnight on June 30, 1997. "On the Chinese side, they believe... time will be on their side. Therefore there is less need to adopt a high moral position," another diplomat said.

Beijing has ruled out easing an effective ban on contacts with Hong Kong governor Chris Patten. Sino-British ties had soured in the early 1990s after Patten angered China by un-

ilaterally introducing democratic reforms in the colony.

China is also determined to dissolve Hong Kong's legislature in 1997.

"This is a closed case. China's stand will not change," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Chen Jian said on Thursday when asked if China was open to persuasion on the dissolution of the British colony's first fully elected legislature.

Mr. Rifkind had asked China's leaders to rethink their decision to disband the 60-seat legislature, returned in September, saying it has popular support.

Despite the scepticism and pessimism, Mr. Rifkind was able to raise human rights concerns with Chinese leaders during his visit without meeting the angry riposte that marred previous meetings.

Britain agreed to upgrade military exchanges, virtually frozen since China's 1989 army crackdown on student pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square.

In Hong Kong, the ripples from Mr. Rifkind's visit have largely died away, indicating that most

of the territory's people have already written off British influence and all eyes have turned to Beijing.

Only about half the legislative council turned up for Mr. Rifkind's briefing on Monday, the first ever by a British foreign secretary, in Hong Kong.

It was standing room only when the Chinese official in charge of Hong Kong, Lu Ping, spoke at function during his visit there in the middle of last year.

Hong Kong people, in the words of independent politician Emily Lau, are pragmatists. They know the power lies with China and not with yesterday's sovereign, Britain.

Much attention in Hong Kong is focused on the inaugural meeting in Beijing later this month of the 150-member preparatory committee, appointed by China to transform the British colony into a Chinese special administrative region.

The committee's every word and action will be minutely examined and analysed in Hong Kong as it tries to divine what lies in store after June 30, 1997, observers say.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Violence can only lead to more violence

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

THE ASSASSINATION of Hamas leader Yahya Ayyash, the developments in the peace process and Palestinian lands as well as domestic affairs were discussed extensively by the local Arabic dailies in the past week.

Fakhri Kassar, a writer in Al Dustour, said that by killing Mr. Ayyash, the Israelis have not ended their problem in Palestine because the move will invite reprisals on the one hand and complicate the negotiations with the Palestinians on the other. The writer said that the quarter of a million people who took part in Mr. Ayyash's funeral have sworn to take revenge on the Israelis, thus forcing the Israeli government to adopt very stringent security measures to protect the Israeli citizens.

The late Mr. Ayyash did not constitute an individual problem that has been eliminated with his death and therefore, said the writer, one would expect retaliation and further acts of violence that would create more tensions in the region.

Yahya Ayyash represents the true warrior and freedom fighter who lived in the caves and the mountains and diligently and incessantly worked for the liberation of Palestine, according to Bassam Emoush, a writer in Al Ra'i. While launching attacks on the Israeli Mr. Ayyash had been aware that he was targeted and that he would sooner or later meet his death at the hand of the Israeli forces, but nevertheless he went on with his resistance activities, forcing the Israeli government to take extra precautionary measures to ensure safety and caused constant worry to the Israeli society, said the writer. It is true that the Israelis have eliminated Mr. Ayyash, said the writer who is a member of the Islamic Action Front parliamentary bloc, but this hero has left behind a legacy and a generation of determined men and women to avenge his death and pursue the fight for freedom.

In eulogising the late Yahya Ayyash, Nawaf Zaru, a writer in Al Dustour said the late hero was a torch lighting the way for the freedom fighters against Israeli occupation. It is true that the Palestinian people's various sectors were all involved in the fight for freedom one way or another, but Mr. Ayyash was at the lead with his heroic activities and dealing heavy blows to the Israelis. His resistance actions, said the writer, placed him on the top of the list of most wanted men by the Israeli forces, who seemed impotent against his daring attacks. All the suicide attacks against the Israeli forces, said the writer, are attributed to Mr. Ayyash, the engineer, who caused

nightmares to the Israeli government.

Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer in Al Ra'i daily, said that the Palestine National Authority (PNA) felt embarrassed by the killing of Mr. Ayyash because his assassination took place in the self-rule area and because his killing was meant to drive a wedge between the PNA and Hamas resistance group. The writer said coming before the Palestinian elections, the assassination of Mr. Ayyash did not only create new tensions but it also forced the Palestinians to resort to reprisals and rekindle new cycles of violence that would not be conducive to the cause of peace.

Commenting on the PNA's invitation to Jordan to send observers to monitor the Palestinian elections, Fakhri Kassar, a writer in Al Ra'i, expressed the view that the Jordanian delegation can only support the official results. Whether the elections are free and fair or whether there is rigging, the Jordanian delegation has no alternative but to endorse the results because a negative response could be interpreted as an attempt to create tension between Jordan and the PNA, said the writer. He said the presence of hundreds of foreign observers is a good thing in favour of the PNA because these would give credit to the Palestinian leadership's integrity in case the elections were really fair and free.

Commenting on the ongoing Israeli-Syrian peace negotiations, a writer in Al Dustour said that these negotiations have been responsible for the current tension between Syria and Iran, which does not support peace with the Jewish state. But these negotiations and the expected eventual peace treaty would give Syria more advantages than being a friend to Tehran because the talks will result in the return of the Golan Heights and more privileges and influence for Damascus in Lebanon, according to Ziad Barakat. At the same time, with the peace treaty, Damascus will get rid of its present conflicting policies vis-a-vis its relations with Iran, while trying to retain its strong ties with the Gulf states, which are opposed to Iran's ambitions in the Gulf.

Commenting on the government's decision to grant its employees a JD 10 raise, Fakhri Kassar a writer in Al Dustour, said that the raise would do nothing towards alleviating the difficulties which the employees face because of the sharp rise in prices of all basic commodities. The writer said that it is true that the government could not give its employees more than JD 10 a month, but at the same time it has the authority to control prices and ensure that the majority of people live within their means and free of the monopoly and greed of profiteers.

Mitterrand's European vision may not survive him

By Paul Taylor
Reuters

PARIS — Francois Mitterrand may carry his vision of European unity to the grave with him today.

The death of the former socialist president coincides with the waning of French enthusiasm for a certain form of European integration. Euro-scepticism is gaining ground in Paris despite President Jacques Chirac's commitment to a single EU currency.

The former head of state died more than any of his predecessors to advance European construction. But Francois Mitterrand's Europe was a cold war Europe. (He) found it hard to adapt to the upheavals in the east, and failed to manage the Yugoslav crisis," Le Monde commentator Claire Trean said.

"He did not manage to adapt to the 1990s and his star faded well before he left the Elysee Palace," she wrote.

Mr. Chirac has made clear in the eight months since he took over from Mitterrand that he is more in the nationalist tradition of General Charles de Gaulle and will not hesitate to put France's national interests ahead of the views of its European partners.

His decision to conduct a last series of nuclear tests, without consulting and against the wishes of most EU states, and his maintenance of border controls that had been due to go

under the Schengen Convention, symbolised the change.

Although such comparisons draw denials from his office, Mr. Chirac's vision of Europe is closer to British Prime Minister John Major's than to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's.

In the debate after the fall of communism in 1989 between those who advocated deepening the existing west European Community (EU) and those who favoured a rapid widening to the east, Mr. Mitterrand was a "deepener". Mr. Chirac is a "widener".

French and international tributes to Mr. Mitterrand stressed his role as the architect of the 1991 Maastricht Treaty on European Union, in partnership with Mr. Kohl.

Both statesmen were concerned that the 1990 reunification of Germany, which was bound to make it Europe's dominant power, should be accompanied by a leap forward in European integration towards a common foreign and defence policy and currency.

Their determination to press ahead with European Unity as an insurance against any possible return of Franco-German conflict was symbolised when they joined hands in Verdun in 1984 on the site of one of the bloodiest battles of World War I.

For Mr. Mitterrand, Europe was the guarantee of peace and the guarantee of a certain permanence of French grandeur," his for-



Francois Mitterrand

mer chief-of-staff Jean-Louis Bianco said.

But despite the support of most of the political and business establishment, French voters approved Maastricht only by a whisker in a 1992 referendum. Recent opinion polls show a majority would vote against it if the ballot were held again.

The treaty became a focus for unease at the EU's remoteness, a convenient scapegoat for domestic politicians at a time of recession and high unemployment, and a butt for frustration at European impotence during the Bosnia war.

Some blamed Maastricht for forcing painful welfare reforms and budget cuts which triggered a 24-day public transport strike late

last year.

The fastest-rising politician in France at present is probably National Assembly Speaker Philippe Seguin, who led the anti-Maastricht referendum campaign.

"Maastricht was the high-water mark of a certain form of integration for which Mr. Mitterrand stood. What follows may not be less European but it will be different," a senior official said.

When former president Valery Giscard d'Estaing, who shared similar European ideals, called last week for a national debate on the future of EU integration, the reaction in the ruling centre-right coalition was that voters were sick and tired of hearings about Europe.

While Mr. Chirac wants to build on the treaty's foundations for a common European foreign and defence policy, he has drawn a pragmatic lesson from the Yugoslav crisis by moving France back closer towards the U.S.-dominated NATO alliance.

The accession of three new members with a strong neutral tradition — Sweden, Finland and Austria — has compounded the difficulty of developing an interventionist EU foreign policy.

And the prospect of up to 30 nations sitting around the EU summit table early next century will fundamentally alter the cosy Europe which Mr. Mitterrand cherished.

'Sound journalistic practices are the most effective safeguard against government restrictions'

Following is the full text of the declaration of Sana'a, which was issued last week at the end of a U.N./UNICEF seminar on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Arab Media.

WE, THE participants in the United Nations/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Seminar on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Arab Media, held in Sana'a, Yemen, from Jan. 7 to 11:

Bearing in mind Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that "everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media, and regardless of frontiers";

Recalling United Nations General Assembly Resolution 59 (I) of Dec. 14, 1946, which states that freedom of information is a fundamental human right, and General Assembly Resolution 45/76 A of Dec. 11, 1990 on information in the service of humanity;

Recalling Resolution 104 adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) at its 25th session in 1989, focusing on the promotion of "the free flow of ideas by word and image at international as well as national levels";

Recalling also Resolution 43 adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-sixth session "recognising that a free, pluralistic and independent press is an essential component of any democratic society," and inviting the director-general "to extend to other regions of the world the action... to encourage press freedom and to promote the independence and pluralism of the media";

Further recalling United Nations General Assembly decision of Dec. 20, 1993 on the observance of World Press Freedom Day on May 3;

Noting with satisfaction the pertinent resolutions of the 28th session of the General Conference of UNESCO (1995), which stressed "the outstanding importance of," and endorsed, the declarations adopted by the participants of the seminars, held in Windhoek, Namibia April 29-3, 1994, and which expressed its conviction that "the joint UNESCO/United Nations... regional Seminar on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Arab Media to be held in Sana'a, Yemen in early 1996 will contribute to creating conditions that will enable pluralistic media to develop and participate effectively in the democratisation and development processes in the Arab region";

Stressing the growing role of the International Programme for the Development of Communica-

tion (IPDC) of UNESCO, whose Intergovernmental Council decided, at its February 1992 session, to give priority to projects which seek to reinforce independent and pluralistic media;

Noting the vital need and the importance of access by women to free expression and decision-making in the field of media;

Noting with appreciation the statements made at the opening of the seminar by the United Nations Assistant Secretary General for Public Information on behalf of the secretary general and the assistant secretary general for communication, information and informatics to UNESCO on behalf of the director general;

Expressing our sincere appreciation to the United Nations and UNESCO for organising the seminar;

Expressing also our sincere appreciation to all the intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental bodies, organisations, agencies and foundations which contributed to the United Nations/UNESCO efforts to organise the seminar;

Expressing our gratitude to the government, people, and media organisations and professionals of the Republic of Yemen for their kind hospitality which facilitated the success of the seminar;

Fully support and express our commitment to the principle of Declaration of Windhoek, acknowledging its crucial importance

for promoting free, independent and pluralistic print and broadcast media in all regions of the world and seek practical application of the principles enshrined in this declaration.

Welcome the worldwide trend towards democracy, freedom of expression and press freedom, recognise efforts by a number of Arab countries in this direction and urge all Arab states to participate in this historic process;

Believe that the advent of new information and communication technologies contributes to genuine cooperation, development, democracy and peace; acknowledge, however, that these technologies can be used to manipulate public opinion; and note that governments in less developed countries do exploit the perceived threat of such technologies to justify curtailing of press freedom.

Deplore that, in the Arab World, journalists, publishers and other media practitioners continue to be victims of harassment, physical assault, threats, arrest, detention, torture, abduction, exile and murder. They are also subject to economic and political pressures, including dismissal, censorship, curbs on travel as well as passport withdrawals or visa denials. In addition to limitations on the free flow of news and information, and on the circulation of periodicals within countries and across national borders, the media is also subject to restrictions in the use of

newsprint and other professional equipment and material. Licensing and abusive controls limit the opportunity to publish or broadcast;

Believe that arrest and detention of journalists because of their professional activities are a grave violation of human rights and urge Arab governments that have jailed journalists for these reasons to release them immediately and unconditionally. Journalists who have had to leave their countries should be free to return and to resume their professional activities. Those who have been dismissed abusively should be allowed to regain their positions.

Declare that

Arab states should provide and reinforce where they exist, constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom of expression and of press freedom and should abolish exceptional laws and measures limiting the freedom of the press; government tendencies to draw limits—"red lines"—outside the purview of the law restrict these freedoms and are unacceptable.

The establishment of truly independent, representative associations, syndicates or trade unions of journalists, and associations of editors and publishers, is a matter of priority in those Arab countries where such bodies do not now exist. Any legal and administrative obstacles to the establishment of independent journalists' orga-

nisations should be removed. Where necessary, labour relations laws should be elaborated in accordance with international standards;

Sound journalistic practices are the most effective safeguard against government restrictions and pressures by special interest groups. Guidelines for journalistic standards are the concern of the news media professionals. Any attempts to set down standards and guidelines should come from the journalists themselves. Disputes involving the media and/or media professionals in the exercise of their profession are a matter for the courts to decide, and cases should be tried under civil and not criminal codes and procedures;

Journalists should be encouraged to create independent media enterprises owned, run and funded by the journalists themselves and supported, if necessary, by endowments with guarantees that founders do not intervene in editorial policies;

International assistance in Arab countries should aim to develop print and electronic media, independent and where a constitutional, effective freedom of information and expression and the independence of the press are guaranteed;

State-owned broadcasting news agencies should be granted statutes of journalistic and editorial independence as open public service institutions. Private and/or community own-

ership of broadcasting media and the creation of independent news agencies also should be encouraged, including in the rural areas;

Arab governments should cooperate with the United Nations and UNESCO, other governmental and non-governmental development agencies, organisations and professional associations, in order to:

(i) Enact and/or revise laws with a view to: enforcing the rights to freedom of expression and press freedom and legally enforceable free access to information; eliminating monopoly controls over news and advertising; putting an end to all forms of social, economic or political discrimination in broadcasting, in the allocation of frequencies, in printing, in newspaper and magazine distribution and in newsprint production and allocation; abolishing all barriers to launching new publications and any form of discriminatory taxation;

(ii) Initiate action to remove economic barriers to the establishment and operation of news media outlets, including restrictive import duties, tariffs and quotas for such things as newsprint, printing equipment, typesetting and world processing machinery and telecommunication equipment, and taxes on the sale of newspapers or other restrictions on the public's access to news media;

(iii) Improve and expand training of journalists and managers, and other media

practitioners, without discrimination, with a view to upgrading their professional standards, also by the establishment of new training centres in the countries where there are none, including Yemen.

Seek the assistance of national, regional and international press freedom and media professional organisations and other relevant NGOs to establish national and regional networks aimed at monitoring and acting against violations of free expression, to create data banks and to provide advice and technical assistance in computerisation as well as international technological interconnections of these facilities with the underscoring that UNDP, IPDC and other development partners would consider this endeavour as a major priority;

Request UNESCO National Commissions of the Arab states to help in organising national and regional meetings to enhance press freedom and create independent media institutions.

The international community should contribute to the achievement and implementation of this declaration.

This declaration should be presented by the secretary general of the United Nations to the General Assembly, and by the Director-General of UNESCO to the General Conference, for follow-up and implementation.

With election looming, first lady faces questions

By Susan Cornwell
Renter

WASHINGTON — The timing could not have been worse for First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. Just as she prepared to polish her public image with a book about children, the ghost of past controversies returned.

New questions about the first lady's role in the so-called Whitewater and Travelgate affairs are threatening to reverse a recent improvement in her public approval rating and revive her standing as a controversial figure — just in time for the 1996 presidential campaign.

Friends of President Bill Clinton's wife say it is simply unfair while some critics call her a liar. Analysts say it is too soon to tell what the political fallout will be.

"They are out to make her a dragon lady," said Lyna Cutler, a Democratic activist and friend of Mrs. Clinton, referring to the first lady's detractors.

As for the president — whose own character is a

perennial political issue — he is standing by his wife. "If everybody in this country had the character that my wife had, we'd be a better place to live," Mr. Clinton told reporters on Tuesday.

An ABC News "Nightline" poll released on Monday showed that 50 per cent of respondents think Mrs. Clinton is not telling the truth about Whitewater, up 15 points since the question was last asked in April 1994.

NEWS ANALYSIS

A growing share, 49 per cent, said the Whitewater matter — a series of charges that the Clintons misused their public positions for personal gain before he became president — was an important issue, up from 40 per cent in March 1994.

The survey was carried out Tuesday, as the president was defending his wife. It found that 46 per cent of those questioned approved of the way Mrs. Clinton was handling her job as first lady, down from

60 per cent in April 1994. Over the weekend, U.S. newspapers exploded with reports that some billing records had been found suggesting Mrs. Clinton had done more legal work than she has acknowledged for a thrift institution, Madison Guaranty, that was mired in the Whitewater tangle of Arkansas business and financial dealings.

The long-sought billing records turned up after the White House made public a memo that suggests Mrs.

Clinton was the driving force in the controversial 1993 purge of White House travel office staff — a charge she has denied. "Blizzard of lies," trumpeted the headline on Monday above a column written by William Safire, in which he reviewed allegations against Mrs. Clinton and concluded she was a "congenital liar."

The White House said if Mr. Clinton were not president he would like to punch

safire in the nose.

Some said it would be best for Mrs. Clinton to address the questions publicly, perhaps in a news conference.

"I guess it's too soon to know to what extent the public is going to be concerned. But I can't imagine (White House officials) are not going to fight this and get it over with," said Barbara Burrell, a University of Wisconsin researcher who has just finished the draft of a book about Mrs. Clinton.

Mrs. Clinton's spokeswoman, Lisa Caputo, said she would be "readily accessible" to reporters during her tour of U.S. cities starting next week to publicise her new book, "It takes a village and other lessons children teach us."

Mrs. Clinton told Newsweek Magazine last week she had no memory of asking that travel office staffers be fired and that her work for Madison Guaranty was minimal.

Both matters continue to be investigated by Congress.

Monitors criticise campaign

(Continued from page 1)

radio station on Friday began broadcasting recorded messages by the more than 650 candidates competing for seats on the council.

"I think the biggest problem with this election campaign is that candidates are using the same slogans. There is nothing innovative or imaginative in this campaign," said Jamil Rabah, an elections analyst for the Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre (JMCC).

The JMCC is a Palestinian-run press service which is reporting closely on the elections.

Palestinian groups accused Israeli authorities of restricting the election campaign in the Jerusalem district, which is not under self-rule.

Hazem Qottaineh, spokesman for the Palestinian domestic monitoring committee, said Israeli police detained two campaign workers Thursday for putting up election posters in East Jerusalem.

Kurdish militia in Turkey flee villages

By Aliza Marcus
Renter

VAN, Turkey — Ramadan Duman once carried a Kalashnikov and was counted among 55,000 Kurdish militiamen armed and paid by the Turkish government to protect their villages from attacks by separatist Kurdish rebels.

Then last summer militia from Mr. Duman's village of Uzundere in southeast Turkey — where the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) is battling for self-rule — were ordered by soldiers to stand guard on a mountain ridge.

The PKK's attack that night was brutal and long. When the fighting stopped, almost half the 45 Kurdish guards were either dead or wounded. It was then the villagers decided to pack up their belongings, turn in their guns and move out, Mr. Duman said.

The village guard system in Turkey is promoted by Ankara as a way for people in the mainly Kurdish region to protect themselves from the PKK, which often raids the settlements for food and shelter and threatens or kills those who refuse.

But a decade after its inception, the programme is under attack: by PKK rebels who target the militia and their families, by bu-

man rights monitors who say villagers are forced to take up arms and by some guards themselves.

International human rights monitors like the New York-based human rights watch and some Turkish political parties have called for an end to arming villagers, arguing the system is open to abuse.

Kurds say security forces use the system to distinguish between supposedly pro-government and pro-PKK Kurds, forcibly evacuating villages that do not join the militia.

"When we became village guards they said it was to protect our village, because otherwise the guerrillas would take food and steal our children," said Mr. Duman, 40, who in October moved to a makeshift refugee camp in the nearby city of Van.

But that was not the way it turned out, he said.

"They used us as a special team, taking us everywhere with them, even across the border into northern Iraq, sending us to the mountains," complained Mr. Duman, standing among grubby children and women cooking potatoes over open fires.

A top Turkish official in the region denied village guards in the area were abused by soldiers.

Ahmet Erturk, the Ankara appointed deputy gov-

ernor for 10 southeastern provinces under emergency rule, said Kurds were flocking to join the militia — which pays the equivalent of \$200 a month, considered a princely sum in the region.

"Why would soldiers put pressure on village guards? This is not something soldiers would do," said Mr. Erturk in his office in Diyarbakir.

He suggested the some guards might actually have been working with the PKK, and when this was discovered by soldiers a conflict broke out.

But former village guards interviewed in three refugee sites in and around Van denied ties to the PKK, which they said often targeted them in the bitter 11-year-long guerrilla war which has claimed more than 18,000 lives.

They said they also had trouble with Turkish security forces, alleging they were forced to take part in cross-border operations, collect firewood for soldiers and were subjected to verbal and physical abuse.

"The PKK would kill the soldiers, the soldiers would kill them and we were in the middle," said 45-year-old Cemal Dayan, who with 185 others moved into a row of empty shops in Van.

Some Kurds have also blamed village guards for

various abuses, such as sending in forced evacuations. The guards interviewed in Van denied taking part in such acts.

Government officials have blamed evacuation and burning of villages on PKK rebels or said people are leaving on their own accord. About 2,500 settlements in the region are empty.

But the village guard system as a test of Kurdish loyalties may be falling apart, as illustrated by Uzundere, a settlement of some 6,000 people right up against Turkey's border with Iraq.

These Uzundere villagers willingly joined the militia in 1989, but found that as the PKK's campaign grew stronger the military trusted them less.

"The army would still say to us — 'you are feeding them, you are Kurds' — even as the mortars were falling on our children, said 36-year-old Dayan.

By this summer, almost all the local militia in the some 50 settlements abutting the Iraqi border had turned in their guns and fled their villages with their families, leaving the area a virtual no man's land.

Those former village guards interviewed say they probably will never return to their homes, at least not while the PKK keeps up its fight for independence.

Hamas stages rally for Ayash

(Continued from page 1)

could be used to compensate the Ayash family, he said.

Palestinian authorities have issued an arrest warrant for Hamad, an alleged Israeli collaborator accused of helping Israeli agents booby-trap the telephone.

Hamad is the uncle of Hamas militant Osama Hamad, who owned the "safe-house" where Ayash was killed.

The suspect, a 44-year-old Gaza businessman, is believed to have fled to the United States the day that Ayash, 29, was killed at the house of Beit Lahia village on the self-ruled Gaza Strip.

A similar Hamas rally was held on Thursday in the West Bank town of Nablus, where the movement's supporters

vowed to avenge Ayash. More than 100,000 people attended his funeral in Gaza City last Saturday.

The killing was followed by a three-day period of mourning, during which the campaign for Palestinian elections was suspended.

2 Israeli soldiers hurt

Two Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded when a bomb exploded near a roadblock in the Gaza Strip, the army said Friday.

An army spokesman said the soldiers were in a jeep on a joint patrol with Palestinian police, who were not injured in the attack on Thursday. The casualties were evacuated by helicopter to hospital in southern Israel.

Chechens free some hostages

(Continued from page 1)

opinion toward the displaced persons.

An estimated 25,000 people have been killed since Russia sent troops into Chechnya 13 months ago to end an independence uprising. Tens of thousands of people have fled to Dagestan and other neighbouring republics.

The hostage crisis, which is a near repeat of a mass hostage-taking by Chechen

guerrillas in the southern Russian town of Budennovsk seven months ago, comes as a severe embarrassment for President Boris Yeltsin, who is expected to run for reelection in June.

In the Budennovsk crisis, the guerrillas were able to negotiate a safe passage home and force the Russians to the peace table in Chechnya, although the talks have since collapsed amid continued fighting.

De Charette to visit Lebanon and Syria

PARIS (AFP) — French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette will visit Lebanon and Syria next week for talks with political leaders, the foreign ministry said here Friday. On the three-day visit starting Jan. 16, Mr. Charette will meet his

Lebanese counterpart Fares Bouez in Beirut along with Prime Minister Rafik al Hariri. In Damascus he will hold talks with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaf and Vice President Muhammad Zuhair Mashariga.

Jordan lowers trade barriers

By Saleiman Al Khalidi
Reuter

AMMAN — Jordan has lowered trade barriers and plans to negotiate free trade agreements with Arab states and the European Union (EU) by 2010, a trade official said Thursday.

Mohammad Smadi, secretary general of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, said imports now facing 70 per cent customs and tax charges would face 50 per cent charges. Imports with a 60 per cent customs and tax charges were reduced to 40 per cent.

Jordan has reduced its average weighted customs rate to 17 per cent from 38 per cent over the last two years.

Negotiations on Jordan's application to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO),

originally made to its predecessor GATT, were expected to start in March.

Jordan also would hold talks with Egypt this month on a free trade accord that could more than double the present two-way annual trade of \$51 million. Dr. Smadi told Reuters.

He said an Egyptian delegation would arrive to discuss the free trade accord, the first proposed with an Arab state, which could pave the way for joint ventures aimed at EU markets.

Jordan is advocating free trade with Arab states to increase regional trade, phasing out protocol accords that restricted tariff exemptions to a bilaterally negotiated list of goods, he said.

It ended protocol trade with Bahrain and Tunisia at the end of 1995.

"Unfortunately intra-Arab trade is being hampered in the guise of bilateral protocols that are restrictive by nature to a number of products," Dr. Smadi said.

Jordanian exports, including reexports to nearby markets, are expected to reach a record \$1.730 billion in 1995 against \$1.424 billion in 1994, preliminary official figures show.

"There is no longer any role for protectionist countries... so that Arab countries can have a role they must be part of the world economy," Dr. Smadi said.

Dr. Smadi said liberalising Arab trade, especially among states currently seeking EU partnership accords would help improve terms of access to European markets.

"Trade liberalisation between Arab countries will

help us in our negotiations with the EU... if we are to open with Europe, it is a priority we first open up with each other," he pointed out.

Dr. Smadi said Jordan had concluded three successful rounds of talks with the EU over a partnership accord. It was expected to reach an accord in mid-1997 to start January 1998 with the goal of free trade by 2010.

Dr. Smadi said trade with Israel, based on a preferential trade accord signed last October, will officially begin next month. The mechanism allows the first trade between the two states since their 1994 peace treaty.

He forecast trade would gradually move beyond the exchange of goods to setting up joint ventures producing for trade blocs such as NAFTA and EFTA where Israel has preferential entry.

Economist blames Sudan's isolation for economic woes

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP)

The isolation that Sudan has imposed on itself is to blame for its deepening economic problems more than a claimed siege by the West, an outspoken Sudanese economist was quoted as saying.

Mohammad Hashim Awad, a professor of economics at the University of Khartoum, also said the government's economic reform programme, backed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), should be reconsidered because it was severely hurting the nation's poor.

The unusual criticism of the regime of Lieutenant-General Omar Al Bashir was carried in the independent daily Akhbar Al Youm.

Dr. Awad said national policies should be rethought in light of "the devastating consequences brought about by the application of the IMF's prescription and the isolation Sudan has imposed on itself by itself."

Lieutenant General Al Bashir, who came to power in a 1989 coup and installed an Islamic regime, has been increasingly criticised by the West, which used to supply Sudan with \$140 million annually in aid.

All but emergency assistance has been eliminated, especially after the United States put the country on its list of states sponsoring terrorism in 1993.

Lieutenant-General Al Bashir's government denies that charge and has accused the West of an undeclared "siege" against Sudan, charging it is designed to undercut the country's Islamic orientation.

tion.

"What is being said about an economic siege on Sudan is not correct at all," Dr. Awad countered. "Economic siege is what is being imposed on Iraq and Libya. There is no embargo on any state in dealings with the Sudan."

Both Iraq and Libya face trade sanctions imposed by the U.N. Security Council. Despite the waning of aid, the government has pressed ahead with a reform programme, adopted in 1990 with backing from the IMF, to free the economy. It has removed many food subsidies, allowed the pound to float and sold off some government-owned companies.

Sudan was suspended from the IMF in 1993 for failing to repay its debts, but the country pledged to stand by its commitment to modernise the economy. It avoided expulsion by beginning in January 1995 to repay its arrears.

Sudan, impoverished by its 12-year civil war in the south, suffers high inflation, a depreciating currency and low wages.

Consumer prices rose at least 80 per cent last year, while the Sudanese pound has been falling steadily against the dollar to a current rate of about 870 pounds.

Salaries for government workers were raised to 15,000 pounds (\$17) a month on Jan. 1 from 9,000 pounds (\$10). The workers' federation had been demanding a minimum monthly salary of 30,000 pounds (\$35), saying it would barely cover a worker's food and other necessities.

Mr. Jarwani said most non-oil sectors recorded positive growth rates in the first half

Higher oil prices reforms boost Omani economy

ABU DHABI (AFP)

Higher oil prices and reforms sharply boosted Oman's economy in the first half of 1995.

The gross domestic product (GDP) surged by around 12.7 per cent to 2.46 billion Omani riyals (\$6.4 billion) in the first half of 1995 from nearly 2.18 billion riyals (\$5.66 billion) in the first half of 1994, said Mahmood Al Jarwani, director of the Muscat Stock Exchange.

The non-oil sector alone jumped by 20.9 per cent because of government measures to restructure the economy and rely more on the private sector. Other sectors grew by more than eight per cent, he told AFP by telephone.

"Our projections from such indicators are that the GDP will grow by more than three per cent in 1995 compared with less than two per cent in 1994," he said.

Oman relies heavily on oil exports and a decline in crude prices have hurt its economy and prompted it to carry out reforms.

Its oil revenues in the first 10 months of 1995 increased by around 8.3 per cent as prices rose by more than \$1 and its production was boosted to around 840,000 barrels per day (b/d) from 750,000 b/d in 1994.

Oil prices have averaged around \$17 barrel this year compared with \$15.50 in 1994. Experts said the increase was due to lower market surplus and the United Nations embargo on Iraqi oil supplies.

Mr. Jarwani said most non-oil sectors recorded positive growth rates in the first half

of 1995 and the trend continued through the year.

His figures showed mining sector jumped by 10 per cent and the oil and gas sector by around 56 per cent. Growth in water and electricity stood at 8.5 per cent; trade at 3.7 per cent; construction fell by 12.2 per cent.

Most sources of other revenues also improved in first 10 months of 1995, a those from gas growing by 10 per cent, customs by 5.1 per cent, the recently-introduced corporate taxes by 1.1 per cent and other revenues 4.3 per cent. Mr. Jarwani said.

He added that the reform investment dropped 18.5 per cent.

"Spending rose by around 3.6 per cent during the period. Yet the budget deficit declined by 20.7 per cent over its projected level 1995," he said.

Oman had forecast budget deficit of around \$1 million in 1995, slightly higher than the 1994 shortfall of \$760 million. The deficit, covered through domestic borrowing and withdrawal from the reserves.

Experts said the country's financial situation would prove as economic reform gain momentum and as a billion gas liquefaction plant with a production capacity of six million tonnes a year, commissioned in 2001.

Oman's reforms include privatisations, "improvement of investment laws, incentives for industrial projects and opening up the stock market."

Turkish trade with Iraq booms

BAGHDAD (R) — Truck traffic between Iraq and Turkey is booming again despite the Gulf war sanctions, with about 1,000 vehicles crossing the border daily, Baghdad-based diplomats say.

They said Iraq, barred from most trade channels because of the sanctions imposed on it for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, had started luring Turkish traders to avoid being cut off entirely if Jordan decided to close its border.

The once-close political ties between Amman and Baghdad are at their lowest ebb. Relations soured when Jordan provided shelter to two key Iraqi government defectors.

"Iraq is trying to leave more than one door open. The brisk trade with Turkey falls within this policy," said one diplomat.

He said Iraqi traders, weary of delays, intensive searches and tightening of controls on the Jordanian side of the border, now find it easier for them to do business

with Turkey.

"Business-conscious Turkish traders would like to snatch the opportunity," another diplomat said.

Improved security in northern Iraq, under Kurdish rebel control, also has helped boost trade. The diplomats said rival Kurdish factions had stopped fighting each other and militias of the Kurdish warlord Massoud Barzani seem to have curbed Turkish Kurd guerrillas in territory under their control.

One diplomat said Iraq, which under the U.N.-imposed sanctions is barred from selling its oil on world markets, was getting most of its sugar and flour supplies from Turkey. The Turkish trucks also brought in detergents, sweets, fruit, vegetables, tyres, batteries and spare parts, he said.

"Iraq needs at least 300,000 tonnes of sugar annually at today's limited demand due to sanctions," he said.

The trade was mostly done through Kurdish middlemen

as the trucks have to pass through territory held by Barzani's Kurdish rebels.

The Kurds, the diplomat said, tax each transiting truck.

"It is no longer diesel-for-food-trade. Iraqi traders pay the Kurds in dollars," a diplomat said.

He said Turkish drivers cashed in on cheap Iraqi diesel, a litre (.26 gallons) of which they bought at 0.03 of a dinar, a fraction of a U.S. cent.

He said the Turks sold their diesel on the open market in the southeastern region, inhabited mainly by a restive Kurdish minority.

Vendors roam the streets of Baghdad with carts full of Turkish apples and garlic. A kilogramme of garlic costs 4,000 dinars, almost equivalent to the monthly salary of an Iraqi civil servant. Apples cost 2,000 dinars a kilogramme.

Traders in Baghdad's Shourja, Iraq's commercial hub, said the flow of goods and latest anti-inflationary

measures by the government had helped to stabilise prices and check a precipitous decline in the value of the dinar, hovering at 2,880 to the dollar.

Diplomats said the trade was of benefit both to Iraqi Kurds and to Ankara which says the prolonged sanctions on Iraq have crippled the economy of its southeastern region.

They said the U.S. and its allies, policing a no-fly zone over northern Iraq from airbases in Turkey to protect rebel Iraqi Kurds, were bound to turn a blind eye on the mushrooming trade.

Turkey was a key ally of the American-led military coalition that ejected Iraqi troops from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf war.

Official statistics show that Iraq imported goods, mainly from Turkey's southeast, worth \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion yearly before sanctions. Ankara also received about \$300 million a year in transit fees from Iraq's oil exports through its territory.

GCC industrial investment put at \$57b

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states have pumped around \$57 billion to expand their industrial sector in a drive to lessen reliance on unpredictable oil earnings.

The funds were invested in nearly 6,000 factories and this boosted the gross domestic product in the non-oil sector to around \$18 billion in 1993 from \$11 billion in 1988, the Doha-based Gulf Organisation for Industrial Consulting (GOIC) said.

Their contribution to the gross domestic product in the

six-states Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) also soared to nine per cent from 5.5 per cent.

"Following the creation of the World Trade Organisation that replaced GATT, GCC states should develop their industrial policies to face changes," GOIC Secretary General Abdul Rahman Al Jaafari, said.

He said regional countries should take advantage of their enormous oil and gas resources to expand their industrial base that could cut their import bill and diversify

their oil-reliant economies.

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — have launched an industrial drive since their once strong economies started to reel under the effects of weak oil prices in mid 1980s.

But their industries have remained limited to light products as they lack technology for heavy manufacture. Such products cover mainly building material, clothes and textiles, paper, foodstuff, aluminium and petrochemicals.

THE Daily Crossword by Raymond Hamel

ACROSS

- Robe closer
- Lane
- Snoozes
- "— and his money..."
- Wimbledon champ
- Vicinity
- Devour greedily
- Mets' stadium
- Grouch
- David Lynch film
- Water carrier
- "Entertainment Tonight" name
- Chinese dynasty
- Bridal party
- Sch. subj.
- Tether
- Imprison
- On the — (not operating)
- A Gabor
- Dierckx merck
- Stumblebum
- "...way of a man with —" (Bible)
- In the past
- Talk on and on
- Overhauled
- Whimpered
- Okla home city
- A Slouan language
- Instrument, briefly
- The "T" in Mr. T
- Parrot
- Logo location
- Calendar abbr.
- Rival of Bjorn
- Hilltop home
- Coup d'—
- Uses a straw
- Midsection
- Beatty film
- Assemble
- "Disco Duck" performer

DOWN

- Previously, old style
- Wading birds
- Large cask
- Turkish VIP
- Pele
- TV's "—Team"
- Communications device
- Mexican munchies
- Chiefs' home
- "— porridge hot..."
- Mejors
- Greek letter
- Sand trap
- Kind of card
- Longest sentence
- Airport abbr.
- Russian jet
- Dolt
- Groceries
- Splitting tool
- Seven
- Do sums
- Mike Stivic's nickname
- Certain doctrine
- Henhouse
- Resting spots
- Splitting tool
- Hold back
- Sherp
- Stalk
- "This is only —"
- Strange
- Worker's reward
- Dramatist
- Clifford
- Nobelists
- Wiesel
- Untested, as talent

Thursday's puzzle solved

PIAT LOOPS BIAS
RORE EAGLE ARTE
ORANGERREESTATE
METER EASTERN
TAPE GSA
ASA MARCH TRAP
CARE VIA PEARED
THEGREENMONSTER
SINGED ROL HAVE
BASE PARKA RIO
DAR RATS
DESTRES TOSEA
BORTOTHEPURPLE
ALIE STORIE BOAR
GEINE EYRIS SITIO

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen

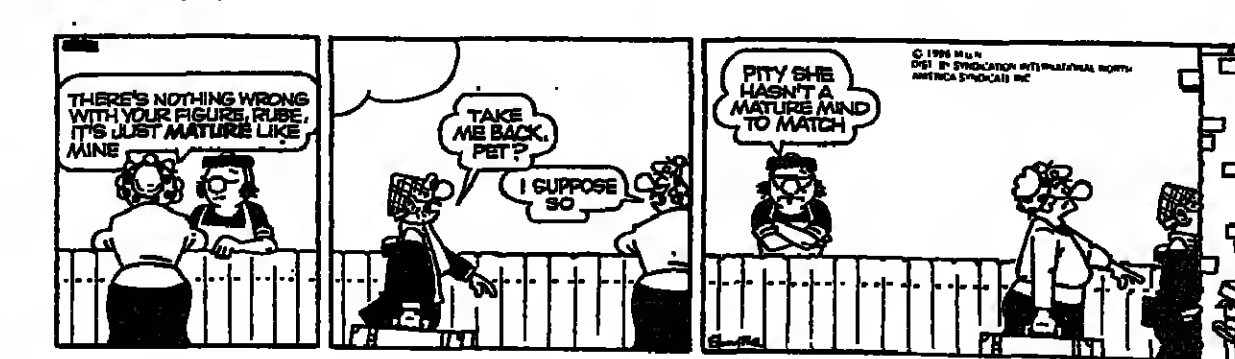


"I like 'Baywatch.' It's the only show where I can be absolutely sure that the women aren't just men in dresses."

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Some change you make this time where another individual is concerned can improve conditions around you considerably.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Get together this morning and later tonight with confidantes and make some worthwhile new arrangements for greater progress.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Study your person wishes which can bring greater happiness at this time and go after them in a quiet but positive way.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) This is a good day today for handling on side and civic affairs in efficient manner. Take unnecessary risks while the road.

LEO: (July 22 to August 22) Do that studying which help to bring you great benefits later today. This the time to grow and elevate your consciousness.

VIRGO: (August 23 September 22) Contact business expert who can give you the right ideas for your own advancement. Be thoughtful of how you can be successful.

LIBRA: (September 23 October 22) If you have better understanding of outside affairs today, you come to fine accord with those you want as fellow associates.

SCORPIO: (October 23 November 21) This is an ideal day to get into activities which you have little time during the busy work day. Be with good friends do fun activities.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Expect today plan some entertainment which is different from the usual and get much pleasure from it in the company of your loved ones.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Keep contented at home and do not get into any disagreements with other in your family. Charming this evening wards those you meet.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 February 19) This can be very interesting day today! you provided you control your temper and drive carefully while on the highway.

PISCES: (February 20 March 20) You feel you can settle some matter with a key only today, but this is the case; find a better way handle any situation with materials.

Birthstone of January: Garnet
Rose Quartz

oil price
s book
economy

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3608/18	Canadian dollar	1.4452/62
	1.6194/04	Deutsche marks	1.6194/04
	1.1644/54	Dutch guilders	29.70/74
	4.9505/55	Swiss francs	1575.87/3
	105.40/50	Belgian francs	6.6100/00
	6.3470/20	French francs	1575.87/3
	5.3799/79	Italian lire	105.40/50
	1.4238/48	Japanese yen	6.3470/20
	0.7448/53	Swedish crowns	5.3799/79
	7.7317/27	Norwegian crowns	1.4238/48
One sterling	\$1.5440/50	Danish crowns	0.7448/53
One ounce of gold	\$399.75/400.20	Singapore dollars	7.7317/27
		Australian dollars	
		Hong Kong dollars	

Investors await entry of foreign capital

By Khattab Salman
Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — Shares traded lower last week at the Jordan stock market, overwhelmed by a state of careful trading awaiting foreign entries, brokers said Thursday.

The Amman Financial Market's (AFM) index, based on share prices of 60 major companies listed in the market, closed at 154.3 points, lower than last week's close by 0.98 points, or losing 0.63 per cent.

Brokers said the market witnessed a fluctuating performance of losses and gains that does not represent the

positive indicators and incentives introduced in the market towards the end of last year.

The government in late December adopted a law encouraging foreign investments to buy on the market and eliminating previous regulations. In addition to that, the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) raised the credit ceiling for investors wanting to enter the stock market.

The AFM weekly report put the volume of trading at JD2,204,132 (\$3,148,760) making the total turnover since the beginning of the year at JD9.44 million (\$13.5

million) with a daily average volume of trading of JD1.54 million (\$2 million).

The banks and financial institutions' sector was the only gainer last week with its index closing at 185.52 points, 0.73 points (0.4 per cent) higher than last week. The turnover in the sector reached JD109,361 (\$145,615.7).

Other indices, the report showed, dropped. The insurance index lost 0.35 points (0.27 per cent), the services companies index slipped 0.69 points (0.53 per cent), and the industrial index dipped 2.33 points (1.87 per cent).

A total of 7,549,14 shares were traded in the past five days executed through 1,955 contracts. The stocks of 65 companies changed hands last week with 37 going down, 23 gaining and five unchanged.

The services sector had the highest volume of trading with a total of JD1,260,163 (\$1,800,233), followed by the industrial sector totalling JD1,051,928 (\$1,502,754.3), and the banks and financial institutions for a turnover of JD 1,019,361 (\$1,456,157) leaving the insurance companies trading with a volume of JD12,680 (\$18,114.3).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
WEEKLY REPORT
STOCK MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (06/01/1996 - 10/01/1996)

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	1,553	2,400	2,400	2,550
JORDAN PAPER & CARDBOARD FACTORIES	2,323	2,400	2,400	2,340
RAVIA INDUSTRIES	780	3,500	3,500	3,900
BAR AL DANA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	2,200	2,150	2,150	2,200
BAR AL DANA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	26,187	7,400	7,400	7,520
BAR AL DANA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	21,743	5,300	5,300	5,400
JORDAN ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	23,774	0,400	0,400	0,590
WESTERN CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	21,645	1,450	1,450	1,420
BAR PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	9,750	1,650	1,650	1,660
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRIES	17,844	1,020	1,020	1,020
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	10,847	1,700	1,700	1,610
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1,874	1,090	1,090	1,030
JORDAN PAPER & CARDBOARD FACTORIES	6,432	3,900	3,900	3,800
BAR PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	4,328	1,820	1,820	1,740
BAR PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	1,774	1,550	1,550	1,540
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	157,575	2,140	2,140	2,250
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	46,849	1,550	1,550	1,540
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	26,284	1,420	1,420	1,400
EL-SAYEDY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	100,455	2,220	2,220	2,200
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	45,549	1,300	1,290	1,370
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETARIAN OIL INDUSTRIES	21,038	1,420	1,420	1,590
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	105,2079	INDEX NUMBER	122.64	
CHANGE			-1.84	
GRAND TOTAL	326,695	INDEX NUMBER	154.30	

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PLC	325,748	231.000	231.000	232.300
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	14,444	4,500	4,500	4,420
BANK OF JORDAN	30,700	3,750	3,750	3,700
WESTERN BANK INVESTMENT BANK	4,022	1,200	1,200	1,210
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	10,743	2,610	2,610	2,520
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK/BN	215	2,350	2,350	2,380
THE JORDANIAN BANK	31,444	4,740	4,740	4,870
JORDAN EXCHANGE BANK	16,812	2,840	2,840	2,860
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	87,889	1,060	1,060	1,060
JORDAN TRADING BANK	45,445	3,580	3,580	3,660
QATAR BANK FOR SAVINGS & INVESTMENT	5,409	3,050	3,050	2,900
WESTERN BANK	755	3,350	3,350	3,180
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	42,566	3,700	3,700	3,580
WESTERN BANK INVESTMENT FOR SAVING	289,532	3,230	3,230	3,130
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	39,381	0,900	0,900	0,690
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	1,744	5,850	5,850	5,560
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	39,210	1,480	1,480	1,370
BANKS SECTOR	10,20773	INDEX NUMBER	185.52	
CHANGE			+0.35	

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARABIAN SEAS INSURANCE	7,200	1,450	1,450	1,400
JORDAN FIRE INSURANCE	4,180	2,500	2,500	2,750
ARAB QATAR INTERNATIONAL INSURANCE	1,300	2,320	2,320	2,600
INSURANCE SECTOR	12,680	INDEX NUMBER	190.25	
CHANGE			+0.26	

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	142,150	1,740	1,740	1,730
JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM	637,472	8,500	8,500	9,000
DAED DISTRICT ELECTRICITY	6,400	1,270	1,270	1,250
JORDAN WIND ENERGY	242	2,350	2,350	2,260
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	31,246	5,900	5,900	5,600
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINE	3,865	2,570	2,570	2,420
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	31,004	1,770	1,770	1,750
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	50,737	1,000	1,000	1,000
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	2,395	1,140	1,140	1,140
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMERCE MOTORS	21,948	2,200	2,200	2,160
ARAB ENTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	289,396	3,380	3,380	3,350
SARAA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	26,348	1,200	1,200	1,240
UNITED CO. FOR ORGANIZING LAND TRANS.	104,780	2,250	2,250	2,250
QATAR LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.	15,100	1,150	1,150	1,020
SERVICES SECTOR	226,0937	INDEX NUMBER	126.75	
CHANGE			+0.54	

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ATTACHED CORP., MATERIALS MANUFACTURING	9,480	1,200	1,200	1,200
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	349,803	3,430	3,430	3,480
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	19,320	3,230	3,230	3,230
THE ARAB POTASH	43,592	5,650	5,650	5,340
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	124,542	10,700	10,700	10,130
JORDAN DRINKING	3,816	7,000	7,000	7,150
WOLFE INDUSTRIES	700	1,400	1,400	1,400
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	26,345	3,400	3,400	3,710
THE JORDAN WASTED MILLS	41,581	7,900	7,900	7,900
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	29,034	4,400	4,400	4,420
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	18,100	6,100	6,100	6,120
JORDAN DAIRY				

DAILY BUSINESS BEAT

A review of news from the Arabic press

Government decides to delay water charge hikes

THE MINISTRY of Water and Irrigation has decided to postpone until further notice raising water charges which was to take effect from the beginning of the year. It has been learnt that the issue will be reconsidered by the ministerial development committee because there are options other than those announced for raising charges on a number of sectors based on consumption. According to a memorandum, presented in November 1995 by the minister of water and irrigation to the prime minister, the cost of a cubic metre of water, including maintenance and operating expenses is 810 fils but is sold to the public at less than half this cost. In 1994, the total cost including administrative and general expenses as well as salaries amounted to JD 41.9 million. In his memorandum, the minister said 330,000 citizens out of 500,000 subscribers would not be affected by higher water charges as they consume less than 40 cubic metres each quarter (Al Ra'i).

Royal Jordanian to announce financial measures this week

ROYAL JORDANIAN is expected to announce this week new measures to ease its debt burden which amounts to about JD 540 million including interest. Royal Jordanian has been negotiating with the Arab banks over the past six months to reschedule about JD 175 million of the debt. Other means envisaged to ease the debt burden, generate liquidity, improve performance and provide profitability include selling part or all of some investments such as the Alia Gateway Hotels, the duty free shop and the sections of supply, engineering and maintenance to other local or foreign investors or entering into partnership with them (Al Ra'i).

Arab Bank detects forgery; embezzler to face court charges

SECURITY OFFICIALS have caught a 10-member gang which embezzled \$1 million from the Shoura (Lebanon) branch of the Arab Bank. The head of the gang, a 48-year-old had started his work outside Jordan and applied to the Arab Bank branch in Shoura to open an account in the name of Hussein Shobaki, a Jordanian residing in Saudi Arabia. The alleged embezzler later requested the bank in Shoura to transfer the balance of the account belonging to the real depositor (Shobaki) from the Zurich branch of the Arab Bank to the branch in Lebanon and the alias then withdrew the amount of about \$1 million. Reviewing the transactions between the two branches, the headquarter of the Arab Bank in Amman was able to uncover the fraud and take the gang to court. Investigations have shown that the gang was able to enter Jordan through illegal means and to forge licences and number plates for rent-a-car vehicles and then ship them to Syria where they were sold (Al Ra'i).

Number of industries at Al Hassan Industrial City rises to 55

THE NUMBER OF licensed projects established at the Al Hassan Industrial City last year reached 14, which carried a total investment of JD 7.5 million and provided 600 job opportunities. The projects were four chemical industries, one for manufacturing textile, two for processing food, four plastic and rubber plants and three in the area of electrical and civil engineering. Of these companies, seven have started actual production, while seven others are under establishment. The total number of projects has risen to 55, investing a total of JD 50 million and employing 1,500 workers. Of the 55 companies, 47 are Jordanian, seven are Arab and one a joint Jordanian-Arab venture. The management of the city is considering buying 500 dunums to expand the industrial complex to the east (Al Ra'i).

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U.S. Dollar	0.87	0.81	0.78	0.78
Sterling Pound	0.51	0.45	0.43	0.43
Deutsche Mark	0.52	0.32	0.31	0.31
Swiss Franc	1.37	1.31	1.37	1.37
French Franc	0.25	0.23	0.23	0.23
Japanese Yen	0.025	0.021	0.021	0.021
European Currency Unit	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.05

Gold	1996 Gr	1996 Gr	1996 Gr	1996 Gr
Gold	299.25	2.90	5.57	0.100

Currency	Mid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7880	0.7890
Sterling Pound	0.4910	0.4914
Deutsche Mark	0.4925	0.4935
Swiss Franc	0.8095	0.8115
French Franc	0.1436	0.1445
Japanese Yen	0.0254	0.0258
Dutch Guilder	0.4390	0.4411
Swedish Krone	0.0000	0.0000
Italian Lira	0.0449	0.0451
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000

Currency	Mid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.4810	1.4820
Lebanese Lira	0.044245	0.044313
Saudi Riyal	0.1870	0.1878
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.8010	2.8020
Qatari Riyal	0.1832	0.1845
Egyptian Pound	0.2100	0.2200
United Arab Emirates Dirham	1.8350	1.8410
U.A.E. Dirham	0.1938	0.1938
Greek Drachma	0.2475	0.2505
Cypriot Pound	1.5775	1.5785

1st division basketball championship begins today

Ahli confident of retaining fourth consecutive title

By Aileen Rannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Following a series of postponements, the long-awaited First Division Basketball Championship kicks off Saturday with only five teams taking part.

While the title might up for grabs at the top of the standings, this year's last-placed team will be playing with utter indifference knowing very well that the worst of results will not affect them. The reason — last year's second division champions Al Abassi, who were promoted to the first division, announced that they were pulling out of the championship citing lack of sufficient funds, and facilities to prepare the team.

Consequently, Al Abassi, the only team representing the Governorate of Zarqa, were relegated back to the second division according to Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) rules and therefore there will be no other relegated team this season.

This year's competition includes: Titleholders Al Ahli, former champions Al Orthodoxy, Al Jazireh, Al Jalil and Al Watani.

With the championship limited to five clubs, most teams seem to be playing this year's tourney as just another scheduled event and the competition's flair and usual interest by fans is somewhat different.

The first division, the country's most prestigious basketball title, was first scheduled for November citing Al Ahli's participation in the Asian Clubs Championship. However the start date was pushed forward again because of the unavailability of sufficient courts at the set dates.

With problems lingering after a controversial Under-22 between Al Ahli and Al Orthodoxy, the only neutral court was the Sports Palace which is used by 22 other sports federations.

By the time the JBF arranged matters, 1995 was already over and two scheduled championships, the Under-16 and U-18 were also indefinitely postponed.

Most experts of the game concluded that the preparations and form of participating teams vary a lot. However, Al Ahli will be looking for their fourth



Al Ahli's team

consecutive title, while Al Orthodoxy will be trying to end their rival's short reign. The three other teams do not seem likely to affect the top standings and seem destined to retain their standings.

Al Ahli set to retain title

Prior to the start of the competition, Al Ahli's assistant coach Ghaith Al Najjar expressed his team's readiness and determination to hold on to the prestigious crown.

In an interview with the Jordan Times, Najjar Friday said his team did not prepare based on a serious schedule for the first division as they had their minds set on the Arab and Asian competitions in the upcoming season.

"The first division does not pose any real worry for us. On the contrary it will be a very good chance to prepare for the Arab Clubs Championship (due to be held in Beirut in April)," Najjar said.

"As for the first division, we know we can retain the title. We do not underestimate any team, but our players are more than ready. In fact I do not see any possible threat for the next five years at the least," he asserted.

Although this will be the first time since 1992 that Al Ahli play without Naser Bushnaq, Najjar seemed confident his team's younger lineup was ready to take charge.

"Our junior team is now the men's team. They have been preparing for the past three seasons, and we have an abundant number of substitutes."

Although Al Ahli were disappointed by their

eight place standing in the Arab Championship in Egypt, they finished fourth in the Asian Clubs Championship in Malaysia last year. Their younger lineup was instrumental in that achievement and Al Ahli seem confident that their training strategy is successful and has begun to bear fruit.

Najjar explained that Al Ahli's training programme was based on long-range planning which would ensure Al Ahli's continued achievements and dominance in years to come. "We are not preparing for a certain match or competition, but I think Al Ahli will have a large base to choose its players from in the future."

Here's an analysis of participating teams:

Al Ahli

The Ahli camp has recently had a consistent training schedule with a large number of players taking part. However their initial lineup will look very different for fans following up Al Ahli's matches throughout the past years.

The team's energetic playmaker Samir Marqus has retired and star centre Naser Bushnaq who helped the team end Al Orthodoxy's decade-long reign in 1990 is now playing in Qatar and is about to be released from Al Ahli.

This leaves Yousef Zaghoul, Marwan Ma'touq with an abundant lineup of younger, promising players who seem to have substituted the older lineup. Faisal Nsour will be the

Opening day schedule

Jazireh-Jalil 6 p.m. (Sports Palace)
Ahli-Watani 6 p.m. (Ahli Court)

Al Orthodoxy will be led by Hilal Barakat and a young lineup of players including: Munaser Abul Tayyeb, Ziyad Al Nabulsi and Mudar Barakat. Fadi Saqqa will be leading the U-18 players who represented Jordan in the World Championship last summer in their hard task alongside their older teammates in the first division.

Al Jazireh

One of the most ambitious teams in the country, Al Jazireh has in recent years become a strong contender for most of the Kingdom's basketball titles.

However this season, Al Jazireh's training was not up to par. The team's coach Imad Al Saeed last month resigned and emigrated to Austria and the team was recently handed over to Fadi Sabbah.

One of Al Jazireh's top stars, Naser Alawneh, who was recruited from Al Hussein has quit the team over differences with the team's management. Alawneh was instrumental in assisting teammates Ghaith Ennabi, Yousef Abu Baker, Anwar Haddad, Husam Lutfi and Ma'an Odeh.

Al Jalil

Al Jalil had mostly maintained a third place standing that dropped to fourth in the past two years.

The team has a good lineup of players including Hisham Al Barbari, Ra'ed Jaber, Omar Abdul Majid but have some technical problems that effect the team's form. They have therefore lost two promising players like Nasser Basam and others to Al Orthodoxy.

Al Watani

Al Watani barely managed to hold on to their place in the first division last season leaving Al Hussein and Homentmen to be relegated.

Last year they were led by experienced Iraqi coach Mohammad Al Najjar who was formerly at Al Orthodoxy. Najjar had high expectations but the team was saved from relegation after overcoming Al Hussein.

After Najjar quit, the team's captain Ihab Safri took charge. Regardless of their form, the team can rest assured of the relegation possibility after Al Abassi withdrew prior to the competition and became the only team to drop to the second division.

Premier League's 17th week concludes

Wihdat 2nd after win over Faisali

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Titleholders Al Wihdat Friday overcame former champions Al Faisali 1-0 in the most crucial match of the 17th week in the Kingdom's Premier League soccer competition.

Al Wihdat's win gave them second place with 35 points in the overall standings while Al Faisali fell back to third with 32 points.

Sufian Abdullah scored the match's only goal delighting thousands of Wihdat fans who had crowded Amman International Stadium. It was a tense and important match for both teams vying to win the prestigious title with five weeks remaining in the competition.

In another match Friday, 10th placed Sahab scored a stunning 1-0 win over Al Hussein who are now in sixth place after leading the standings throughout the competition's first round.

At Salt Stadium, Al Ahli scored an important 2-1 win over Al Jalil to improve their overall points to 22. Al Jalil had led 1-0 before Al Ahli took control of the match and changed the result to their advantage. Al Ahli's win will be crucial in

keeping them out of the last four.

Meanwhile, Al Ramtha remained in the lead after a 3-0 win over Al Baqaa who are just inside the relegation zone.

Al Jazireh scored the week's biggest win, 6-0 over last placed Al Russeifah.

Al Qadissieh dropped one place to fifth after their 1-0 loss to Kufroum who moved up to fourth and have delighted their fans and officials with their results in only their second season in the first division.

Meanwhile, officials of clubs in the northern part of the Kingdom have lodged a complaint with the Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF).

The petition was signed by officials of Al Hussein, Ramtha and Jalil Clubs. Kufroum Club officials attended the meeting but quit halfway through the meeting.

The meeting was called by Al Hussein after their 1-0 defeat to Al Faisali. Al Hussein said that at the time of Al Faisali's goal there was another ball in the stadium warranting the referee to stop the match, which he did not.

Al Hussein lodged a complaint with the JSF and then called for the meeting with its neighbouring clubs.

The petition dealt with bias by referees, income from match tickets as well as the fact the clubs were not represented on the JSF board.

STANDINGS AFTER 17TH WEEK

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Ramtha	17	11	4	2	26	6	37
Wihdat	17	10	5	2	31	15	35
Faisali	17	9	5	3	26	12	32
Kufroum	17	8	7	2	24	14	31
Qadissieh	17	9	3	5	27	16	30
Hussein	17	7	5	5	31	16	26
Jazireh	17	7	5	5	33	22	26
Ahli	17	5	7	5	24	20	22
Baqaa	17	5	3	9	22	39	18
Sahab	17	2	8	7	13	24	14
Jalil	17	2	2	13	20	44	8
Russeifah	17	-	-	17	15	70	-

McKey, Miller lead Pacers past Bucks

INDIANAPOLIS (R) — Derrick McKey and Reggie Miller got the job done down the stretch with a game-ending 7-0 run that propelled the Indiana Pacers to a 96-88 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks on Thursday.

McKey scored five of his 15 points in the closing minute and Miller added 24 points, including the final two for the Pacers, who won for the 13th time in 17 games.

Dale Davis had 21 points, 11 rebounds and five blocks. Rik Smits added 20 points and 12 rebounds and Mark Jackson dished out 12 assists for Indiana.

Vin Baker paced the Bucks with 23 points and 10 rebounds. Glenn Robinson, who had 15 points, hit a basket to get Milwaukee within one, 89-88, with 83 seconds left.

But McKey hit a pair of free throws 21 seconds later to restore Indiana's three-point lead and drained a three-pointer to give the Pacers a 94-88 edge with 26:2 seconds remaining.

Miller closed the run and game with a pair of free throws with 13.8 seconds remaining.

"I think our defence won the game for us," Indiana coach Larry Brown said.

"We defended well down the stretch, especially late. Derrick did a great job on Robinson."

Milwaukee led 46-40 at the half and took their last lead

of the game with 6:03 left when Terry Cummings hit a bucket that made it 81-80.

In Charlotte, Allan Houston scored 26 points and Joe Dumars tallied six of his eight points in the final 2 1/2 minutes as the Detroit Pistons escaped with a 95-93 victory over the Hornets.

After Kendall Gill gave Charlotte an 86-85 lead with 2:33 remaining, Dumars hit a three-pointer. Grant Hill made a jumper and Otis Thorpe dunked to put Detroit ahead, 92-86, with 63 seconds to play.

Gill banked in a shot with 43 seconds left and Glen Rice nailed a three-pointer to close the deficit to 92-91 with 13.6 seconds left. But Dumars then made three free throws in the final 12.2 seconds to seal the win.

"We showed a lot of poise here tonight," said Dumars after the Pistons won for the eighth time in 10 games.

In Toronto, Mookie Blaylock scored 21 of his 24 points on three-pointers to help the Atlanta Hawks to an 87-79 victory over the Raptors.

Stacey Augmon added 15 points, including four in a 9-0 spurt to close the game, as the Hawks won for the third time in four contests.

Rookie Damon Stoudamire had 18 points for Toronto, losers of five in a row.

The Raptors led 79-78 with just under two minutes left when Augmon sank a jumper

from the right corner that put the Hawks in front to stay.

At Golden State, Elliot Perry had 20 points and eight assists and Wesley Person added 18 points as the undermanned Phoenix Suns held on for a 111-106 victory over the Warriors to snap a four-game losing streak.

A.C. Green scored 11 of his 17 points in the first quarter and added 10 rebounds for Phoenix, which dressed just eight players as Charles Barkley missed the game with a toenail infection and John "bot rod" Williams, Kevin Johnson and Stefano Rusconi were also not available.

Joe Smith, bad 28 points and 13 rebounds and Latrell Sprewell added 23 points for Golden State, which saw its six-game home winning streak end.

In Los Angeles, Loy VAught scored 18 points and added 12 rebounds to propel the Clippers to their fourth straight win, a 109-89 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Lamond Murray added 17 points and Malik Sealy had 16 for Los Angeles.

Brent Barry scored 11 of his 13 points in the fourth quarter as Los Angeles outscored the T-Wolves 34-20 in the final period.

Christian Laettner scored 24 points and Sam Mitchell added 21 for Minnesota, losers of 13 of its last 15 games.

Mexico opens CONCACAF Gold Cup defence with victory

SAN DIEGO (R) — Mexico opened its defence of the CONCACAF Gold Cup tournament with a 5-0 group A rout of St. Vincent and the

Grenadines on Thursday. Mexico got two-goal games from Luis Garcia and Ricardo Pelaez and a single strike by Agustin Garcia, but

still they beat a few whistles at the final whistle from fans not satisfied with the effort.

Such is the pressure on the coach of the Mexican national team, Bora Milutinovic. Criticism has been piled on Milutinovic for a run of poor results since he took over last summer after leaving his post as United States national coach.

Mexico has won just one of four matches under Milutinovic, who led Mexico to the 1986 World Cup quarterfinals

but has suffered losses to Yugoslavia and Slovenia's under 23 team in recent months.

His introduction drew a mixed reaction of cheers and jeers from the crowd, and anything less than a title at this tournament might trigger his dismissal.

Mexico dominated play for long periods in the first half, pinning St. Vincent and the Grenadines in their own half and rarely permitting them

past the midfield line.

A shot by Alberto Garcia Aspe tested St. Vincent goalkeeper Fitz-Gerald Bramble early, but he acrobatically punched the shot away, and defender Verbin Sutherland blocked Edson Astivia's follow-up attempt.

Entering Sunday's National Football League (NFL) semifinal matchup against Green Bay, the Dallas Cowboys' quarterback is confident of reaching his third Super Bowl in four years.

But he is also mindful of the pain caused when the Cowboys were upended by San Francisco in last year's semifinals.

Cowboys brace for Packers' attackers

DALLAS (Agencies) — "Since we first won the Super Bowl in '93, it became the goal every year," Aikman said. "When you come up short of that it's extremely frustrating. You spend the season trying to put yourself in position to accomplish that."

"Certainly there is some pressure to get back to the Super Bowl. Most of the pressure is self imposed. We're all still hungry. I know what it's like to be one game away and go back in the locker room knowing you didn't get it done. If we lose Sunday, it will be a huge

disappointment."

The Cowboys are favoured to reach American football's January 28 title game against Pittsburgh or Indianapolis. The talent of Aikman, Emmitt Smith, Michael Irvin and Deion Sanders makes Dallas the team to beat.

"Who we are and what we have, we have to go out and prove it," Dallas coach Barry Switzer said.

The Cowboys have won five in a row over the Packers, ousting Green Bay from the playoffs the past two years.

The Packers eliminated reigning champion San Francisco last week, denying the Cowboys a chance at revenge over the 49ers team that ousted them a year ago. But that has not diminished the importance of a title.

"People would be fooling themselves if they believe that going to the Super Bowl would somehow be tainted because we didn't get to play San Francisco," Aikman said. "We have tremendous

respect for Green Bay and what they have accomplished. We're going to have to play our best game of the season."

"There's a lot of motivation. The first season we went to the Super Bowl was great for us because nobody realised how talented we were. It shocked a lot of people including ourselves. I guess the innocence of it has been lost. But it's not any less exciting."

Green Bay coach Mike Holmgren has watched the Cowboys dominate his club in recent years, averaging 422 yards in the past five meetings.

"Until you beat a team, there's going to be that little doubt in everyone's mind. You think you can beat a team but you haven't done it. We're not cocky, but confident."

Speak for yourself, coach. Green Bay quarterback Brett Favre said the Packers are cocky and rightfully so after toppling the 49ers.

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The program is intensive. (Classes are in the morning and meet 20 hours per week, Saturday - Wednesday).

Those interested please call at the Language Centre for registration or further information.

Registration begins on Saturday, January 21, 1996.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Extending Tender Announcement

The Ministry of Education call upon interested companies and establishments specialised in the field of computers to participate in bid No 1/96 for establishing Information Internet in the center of the Ministry of Education to be linked with other Directorates inside the kingdom, financed through the Second Sector project for Educational Development.

Bidders are invited to collect tender's documents from Furniture and Equipment Division, all bidders are requested to bring a valid professional license.

- Last date for selling the copies of the bid will be February 29, 1996.
- Fees JD 500 (non-refundable).
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- Expenses of the announcement will be paid by the awarded bidder.

Head of Special Tenders Committee

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		POCAHONTAS Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5 p.m.		* ASSASSINS Shows: 6, -0:30		Shows: 12:30, 3, 5:30, 8, 10:30	
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Asian Squash Championship Team competition starts today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Having finished their singles schedule, the continent's top squash players Saturday begin the team competition at the 8th Asian Squash Championships.

Five Arab countries are among the 13 teams taking part in the competition underway. They represent Malaysia, Pakistan, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Bahrain, Hong Kong, India, South Korea, Kuwait, Lebanon, Taiwan and Jordan.

Pakistan are the seven time winners of the competition and seem set to retain it again despite top seed Jansher Khan's withdrawal from the competition Wednesday ciring backache.

Khan, the world champion, told the press he did not want to aggravate a possible injury and that he would be leaving to Britain and take a month's rest before resuming his professional squash schedule.

The men's teams have been divided into four groups. In the semifinal round the group 1 winner will play the group 4 winner and group 2 will play group 3.

Group 1
Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bahrain
Group 2
Hong Kong, Kuwait, Lebanon
Group 3
Malaysia, Jordan, South Korea
Group 4
India, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Palestine

The women's teams were divided into two groups:

Group 1
Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka
Group 2
Hong Kong, Singapore, S. Korea, Lebanon

Championship record

★ Pakistan 1981 (13 countries-Jordan finished eighth)
1st: Pakistan
2nd: India
3rd: Singapore
★ Jordan 1984 (7 countries-Jordan finished fifth)
1st: Pakistan
2nd: Singapore
3rd: Malaysia
★ Malaysia 1986 (12 countries-Jordan finished fifth)
1st: Pakistan
2nd: Singapore
3rd: Kuwait 1988 (13 countries-Jordan finished fourth)
1st: Pakistan
2nd: Singapore

Saturday's schedule

★ Men's matches (9:30 a.m.)
Pakistan-Bahrain
Hong Kong-Lebanon
India-Palestine
Malaysia-S. Korea
Singapore-Taipei
★ Evening schedule (5:30 p.m.)
Pakistan-Sri Lanka
Hong Kong-Kuwait
Malaysia-Jordan
India-Taipei
Singapore-Palestine
★ Women's matches (12 p.m.)
Hong Kong-Singapore
Malaysia-India
★ Evening schedule (7 p.m.)
Malaysia-Sri Lanka
Hong Kong-Lebanon

Leong, Gul win Asian singles titles

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Malaysia's 14-year-old Leong Siuynn Friday upset reigning champion Meesha Jhangir of India 3/1 in the final match of the women's singles competition at the 8th Asian Squash Championships.

In a later match which ended late Friday evening Pakistan's Mirzaman Gul won the men's singles title after overcoming Hong Kong's Abdul Faheem Khan 3/2.

Pakistan's Zarak Khan had finished third and India's Arjun Singh fourth.

In earlier matches, Malaysia's Kenneth Low took fifth place after defeating Jordan's Mohammad Saeed who finished sixth. Jordan's Yazeed Adas had finished 10th, Hamed Saeed 13th and Wael Tabalat 15th.

World champion Jansher Khan came in eighth after pulling out Wednesday with backache. Teammate Zubair Khan, who seemed to have been injured in his match against teammate and brother Zarak, pulled out of his match against Jordan's Mohammad Saeed and finished seventh.

Agassi beaten in warm-up event ahead of Open

MELBOURNE (R) — American world No. 2 Andre Agassi's confidence was dented ahead of next week's Australian Open when he tumbled to defeat against Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov at the Colonia Classic Exhibition event on Friday.

Agassi, the number two seed and defending champion at Flinders Park for the first Grand Slam of the year, lost 6-2, 2-6, 6-7 (2-7) to the world number six in the semi-finals at Kooyong in Melbourne.

But Agassi said he was pleased with his preparation for the Australian Open, where he will play a qualifier in the first round, starting on Monday.

"I would be pleased to be hitting the ball as well as I did today at the Open next week," Agassi told reporters later.

"Obviously, the intensity level will be a lot higher for a Grand Slam event," said Agassi, who praised Kafelnikov for his performance on Friday.

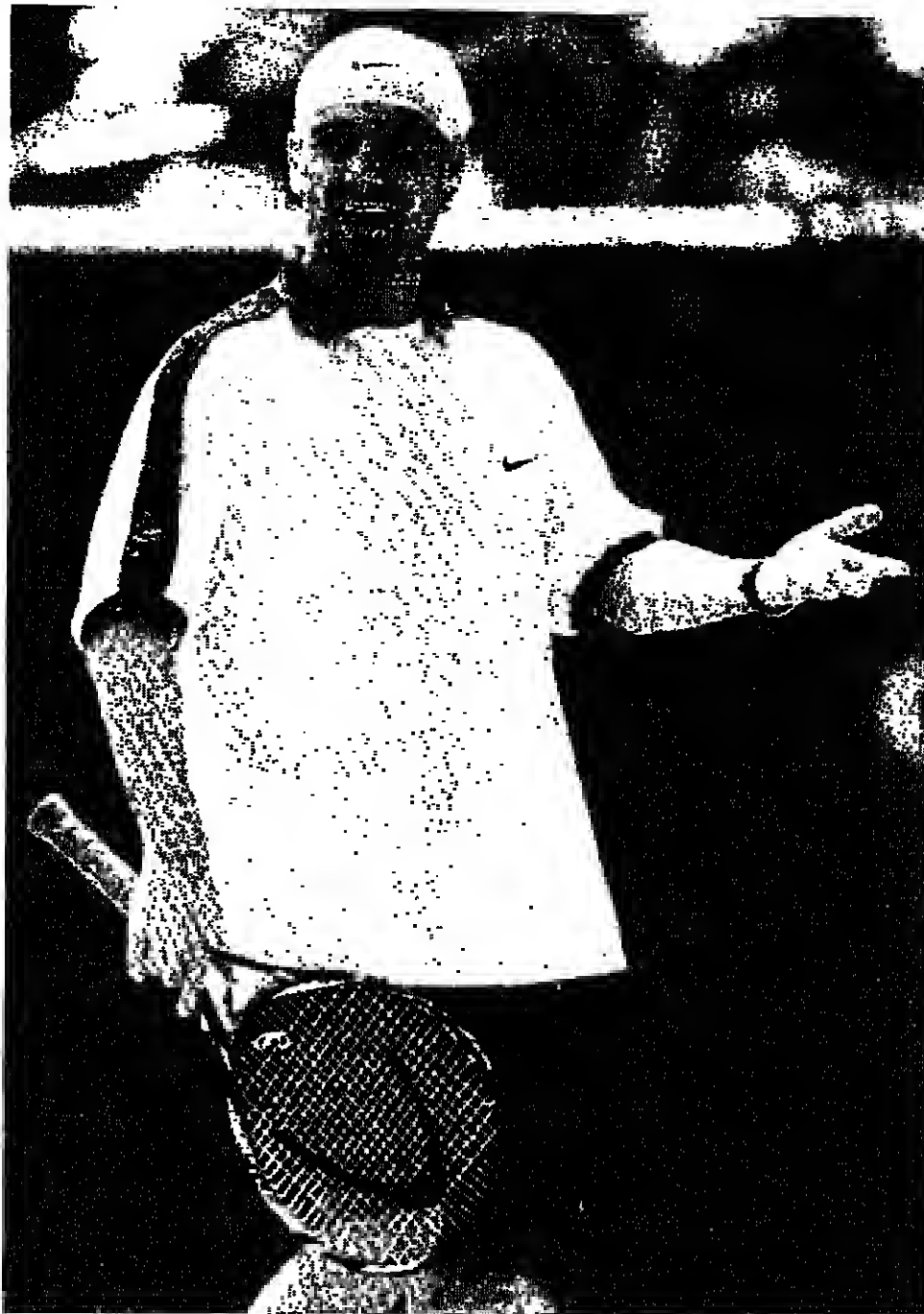
"Yevgeny is a threat to beat anyone on a good day... he is definitely talented enough to make that next step (winning a Grand Slam)," Agassi said.

Kafelnikov will meet American and world number five Michael Chang in Saturday's final at Kooyong.

In the match for fifth place in the eight-man invitational event, South African Wayne Ferreira beat Australia's Pat Rafter 7-6 (7-4) 6-3.

Swedish veteran Stefan Edberg, in his final match at Kooyong before his planned retirement at the end of the season, beat Andrea Gaudenzi of Italy 6-4 6-1 to claim seventh place.

Agassi, who will play fellow American and world number eight Jim Courier in a third place play-off on Saturday, was warned for verbal abuse during his match against Kafelnikov and



Defending Australian Open champion Andre Agassi of the U.S. looks in amazement at the line judge as he disputes a call during his match against Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov at the Kooyong Classic in Melbourne (Reuters photo)

queried several line calls. But he said he felt no recurrence of the chest muscle injury that forced him to

miss his country's Davis Cup final win against Russia in Moscow last month. "I am feeling 100 per cent

at the moment. I am healthy," said Agassi, who looked pleased with his first round draw at Flinders Park.

Olympics more important than Davis Cup — Agassi

MELBOURNE (AFP) — For Andre Agassi, the Olympic Games are bigger and more important than the Davis Cup.

The charismatic world No. 2, preparing here for next week's opening Grand Slam, the Australian Open, said the Davis Cup, one of the great vestiges of tennis this century, should be played every second year rather than on an annual basis.

Asked what his commitment would be to the United States' Davis Cup team this year, the 25-year-old Agassi said he would play in the Cup if it was "convenient" for him.

"I'm definitely going to approach it (Davis Cup) on a

practical level this year, it's not something I'm going to put at the top of the priority list at all," Agassi told reporters after losing in three sets to Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov at the Colonia Classic.

"I cannot afford to, especially during an Olympic year. I think it's not good for the game, I don't think it's good to have the Davis Cup on during an Olympic year."

"The public has to understand where it fits, and know where tennis fits in during an Olympics, but if it's convenient I wouldn't be against playing it (Davis Cup)... I don't know how convenient it's going to be, it over seems like it is."

Agassi said the prestige of

the playing in the Olympics every four years outweighed the annual appeal of the Davis Cup.

"We (USA) played the finals of the Davis Cup in Moscow last month and we have to play again in a month... that's a little different than playing once every four years."

"You're one of the few thousand athletes representing your country. The Olympics are the Olympics, it's a gold medal and it really holds it own."

"It's bigger than the Davis Cup in my mind and more important."

Agassi said the Davis Cup should be played every other year and that even the know-

ledgeable tennis fan had trouble understanding the format of it.

"Regardless of how commercial the sports have become, the Olympics are just the Olympics, they are one arena to represent your country in the purest form... it's just you going out there to try to win a medal for your country."

"At the end, when they say that American has won an 'X' amount of gold medals and silver and bronze, you feel good about contributing to that."

Agassi said the coincidence of Atlanta hosting the Olympics this year did not make the importance of playing in it for him any greater.

Australian Open draw announced

MELBOURNE (AFP) — World number-one Pete Sampras, seeking to work his way into the Australian Open after a virus setback, has drawn Australian Richard Fromberg in the first round of the year's opening Grand Slam event which gets underway here Monday.

At Friday's draw Sampras appeared to be given a tougher ride to the final than his great rival, Andre Agassi, who beat him in last year's final.

Fromberg, a gritty member of Australia's Davis Cup team but more at home on a clay-court, is ranked 90th and can be expected to give Sampras a thorough work-out. After that the American could find himself up against another home player in Mark Philippoussis, currently ranked 39th.

The first seed to be drawn in Sampras' portion of the draw is Paul Haarhuis of the Netherlands and that could be followed by an explosive showdown with Croatia's Goran Ivisevic in the quarter-finals.

Sampras' opponent in the semi-final should be either Boris Becker or Russian Davis Cup player Yevgeny Kafelnikov.

The 24-year-old American, who delayed his arrival in Australia until Wednesday and who pulled out of the lead-up Colonial Classic here because of the virus, admitted he might be vulnerable in the early rounds as he seeks a full recovery.

Agassi, who won his third Grand Slam title at Flinders Park last January, faces a qualifier in his opening match, and his first real test should come against 15th-seeded American Todd Martin in the round of 16.

Stefan Edberg, ranked 30th in the world and on his farewell year on the tour, is unseeded for the first time in 14 Australian Opens, while Australian Gilbert Schaller, ranked 19th, who just misses out on a seeding, could face Sampras in the third round.

Other enticing first round clashes include a match between triple Wimbledon champion Boris Becker and Britain's big-serving Canadian-born Greg Rusedski.

In the women's event, Monica Seles, rated by local bookmakers as a 2-1 favourite to land her fourth Australian Open crown and stretch her unbeaten record which currently stands at 21-0, has drawn a qualifier in the first round — as has second-seeded Conchita Martiñez.

Martinez got the second seeding after the withdrawal of Steffi Graf last month because of a foot injury.

Spain's other top hope, Arantxe Sanchez Vicario, beateo in the 1994 and 1995 finals, is in the same half of the draw as Seles.

Reigning champion Mary Pierce, the fourth seed from France, is drawn in Martinez's half. She is up against Austrian Petra Schwarz.

Ivanisevic wins Sydney International semifinal

SYDNEY (AFP) — Goran Ivanisevic won a nail-biting semifinal round of the Sydney International Friday, dispatching Australian Todd Woodbridge in a match which tested the patience of both players.

Ivanisevic said he was unhappy with the way he played the 19 break points in the match, which had both players struggling to keep their tempers as tension mounted in the opening games of the encounter.

The match was eventually resolved 6-3, 7-6 (8/6) in a one hour 40 minute battle.

Woodbridge said he was surprised Ivanisevic had kept his patience during the long rallies the local talent forced him into, commenting that this was a departure from the Croatian's usual approach.

Ivanisevic played the first few games of the match from the base line, despite his stated intention Thursday to play more aggressively.

The number-one seed admitted that in the past he had no patience at all in his game, but he was working on cooling down his demeanour, adding that the danger in this type of transition was that he

would become too patient and never venture to the net at all.

He said he was also working on the consistency of his game, and had realised he had to "hit a winner every time, no matter what the score," instead of letting his game drop during less important points.

Woodbridge was not immune to the pressure either, reacting angrily to heckling from the crowd after a double fault, amidst surprisingly high support for his Croatian opponent from the Aussie spectators.

But Australia's top-ranked player was philosophical about the narrow loss, pointing out that achieving seven aces to his powerful opponent's five was no mean feat.

Ivanisevic headed for the practice courts straight after his victory, to put to some work on a troublesome serve.

The number-one seed said he had proved critics wrong when they claimed his service game was his only strong point.

"I only got five aces today and I still won so they can't tell me I'm only serving," he said.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH

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TOO MANY TRUMPS

East-West vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH
♠ 3
♥ A K J 8 5
♦ Q 10 9 4 3
♣ K Q

EAST
♠ A J 10 9 4
♥ 7 6
♦ Q 10 9 7 4 3 2
♣ K 7 6

SOUTH
♠ K Q 8 6 5 2
♥ Void
♦ A J
♣ A 10 8 6 2

The bidding:
WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
1♣ Pass Pass 3♣
2♣ SNT Pass 4♣
Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Six of ♠
The usual reaction to a bad trump break in blind panic. In the Rosenblum Team Championship at the recent World Olympiad in Albuquerque, A. Sadek of Egypt showed that keeping your cool and going about your business is the better approach.

West's hand is not our idea of a vulnerable weak two-bid, but perhaps that accounts for why we are writing while West was playing in the world championship. When the opening bid was followed by two passes, North was licking his chops

at the prospect of converting a reopening double to penalties (that would have been down three with accurate defense), but South chose to cue-bid instead, then convert three no trump to four spades. East, Chip Martel of Davis, Calif., didn't even consider a double — he liked where the opponents were and didn't want to do anything that might nudge them to another spot.

West's choice of a diamond away from the king really did little for declarer other than provide an extra entry to the dummy when the queen was put up. Declarer led a low spade to the queen, and received the bad news when he continued with a low spade and West showed out.

East exited with a club to the queen. The king of hearts was cashed for a club discard and a low heart was led, East discarding a club as declarer ruffed. After cashing the ace of diamonds, a club to the king provided the entry to lead the ace of hearts.

East's game was cooked. If he ruffed low, declarer would overruff and run clubs, losing only two more trump tricks. If he discarded, declarer would pitch another club and lead any red card off the table, ruffing in hand if East discarded again. East would have to ruff the ace of clubs and lead a trump from A J to allow declarer to score the king of trumps for the fulfilling trick.

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- All applicants shall be members of the Jordan Engineers Association.
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Amman 11118,
Jordan.

Fax: 03 377 130 - for the attention of the Projects Manager.

Russia to work 'hand in glove' with U.S. in Bosnia

TUZLA, Bosnia-Herzegovina (Agencies) — The first Russian troops to serve in the NATO-led peace enforcement mission in Bosnia flew into the U.S. airbase in the northern city of Tuzla Friday with their general saying they were ready to work "hand in glove" with the Americans.

General Nikolai Staskov, the deputy commander of Russia's airborne forces, was on the first Russian plane to touch down at 9:55 a.m. (0855 GMT).

Gen. Staskov, and the commander of the Russian brigade, Colonel Alexander Lentsov, were warmly greeted on the apron by the commander of the peace implementation force in the U.S.-controlled sector, Gen. William Nash.

"It's a great thing for the deployment, a great thing for the United States and a great thing for Russia," Gen. Nash said as he greeted them.

Gen. Nash, clapping the big Russians around the shoulders, told reporters Gen. Staskov "is here to ensure a steady deployment. He's got a very important job."

Turning to the imposing Lentsov, he said: "This is the fellow I'm most happy to see," explaining that the two would be working very closely together in what is potentially the first joint combat mission by troops from the former cold war enemies since World War II.

About 100 airborne troops landed in the first two planes, an Ilyushin-72 and an Antonov-22, and immediately began unloading trucks laden with communications equipment, which could possibly be more important for the joint mission than weapons.

A U.S. team of nine Russian-speaking special forces troops flew into Tuzla from Colorado last Monday to ease communications with the Russians.

NATO chief Javier Solana meanwhile, started meetings with Bosnian and rebel Serb leaders ahead of a high-profile first visit to the region by U.S. President Bill Clinton.

In Geneva, U.N. human rights rapporteur Elizabeth Rehn said she intended to visit suspected mass burial sites in Serb-held areas of Bosnia by the end of the month.

Mr. Solana, the NATO secretary general since replacing Willy Claes in December, arrived in Sarajevo for meetings with the Bosnian leadership.

He was later to hold talks with Bosnian Serb assembly President Momcilo Krajisnik at Lukavica, outside Sarajevo, in a Serb army base bombed by NATO jets last year.

A Western diplomatic source said meanwhile that the Bosnian Serb leadership had softened its stance on its threat to order a mass exodus

of up to 70,000 Serbs from the Serb-held areas around Sarajevo which are due to return to the Bosnian government in March.

Bosnia's Krajisnik appeared to show a "change of attitude" in a meeting with the High Representative Carl Bildt Thursday, the source said.

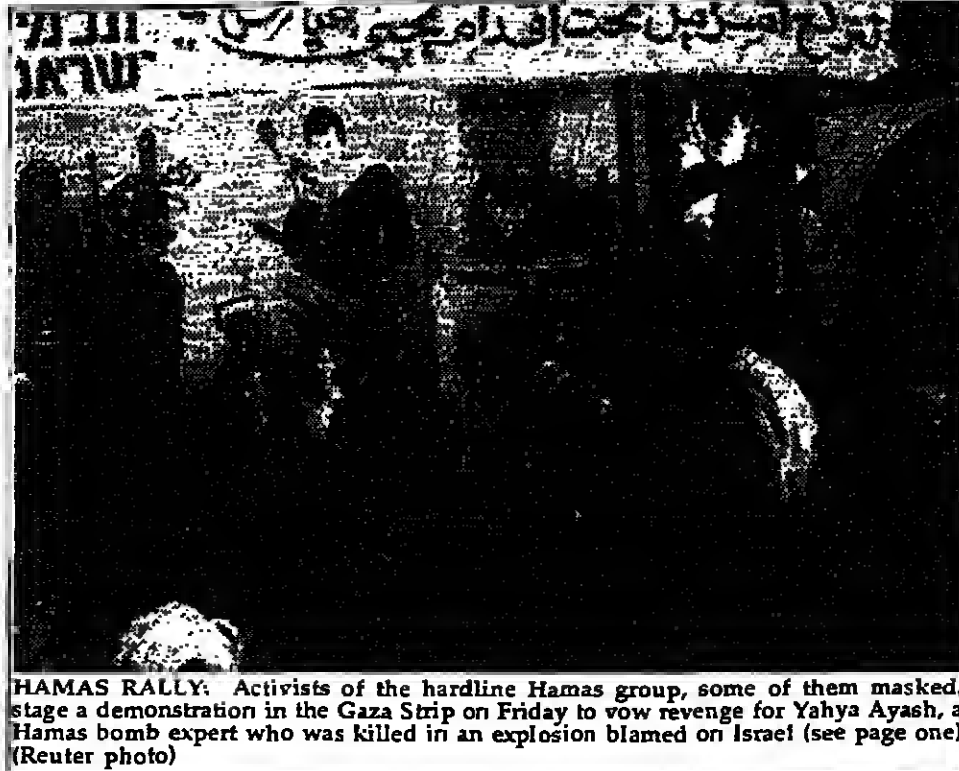
The visit of Mr. Clinton to the U.S. troops headquarters in Tuzla, and to U.S. staging posts in Croatia, Italy, Hungary, will include meetings with the Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic and his Croatian counterpart Franjo Tudjman.

Mr. Clinton was expected to stress the importance of making progress in calming tension in the country and pressing ahead with political normalisation after nearly four years of war.

In Sarajevo, President Izetbegovic meanwhile, announced that his government would soon hold high-level diplomatic contacts with Belgrade.

Bosnia and the rump Yugoslavia — Serbia and Montenegro — officially recognised each other as separate states in a deal struck on the sidelines of the signing of the Bosnian treaty in Paris last month.

Serbian Foreign Minister Milan Milutinovic will visit Sarajevo "very soon" or Bosnian Foreign Minister Mohammed Sacirbey will visit Belgrade, Mr. Izetbegovic said.



HAMAS RALLY: Activists of the hardline Hamas group, some of them masked, stage a demonstration in the Gaza Strip on Friday to vow revenge for Yahya Ayash, a Hamas bomb expert who was killed in an explosion blamed on Israel (see page one) (Reuters photo)

Dutch premier arrives tomorrow

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok arrives here Sunday for talks with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on bilateral relations and developments in the Middle East peace process.

During his two-day visit, Mr. Kok also expected to be received by His Majesty King Hussein and sign a joint declaration on transportation and a letter of intent for an agreement on protecting investments in the two countries. Schouten, the charge d'affaires at the Dutch embassy here, said.

Mr. Kok, who will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo and representatives of the economic and transport ministries, will open the Dutch embassy in Amman on Jan. 15.

"Holland is very interested in the peace process in the

Middle East," said Mr. Schouten. "We believe that this visit will strengthen the relations and cooperation and will make our relations stronger in the fields of economy and science."

Mr. Kok will visit also Syria, Israel and the self-rule areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. He will meet with Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Chairman Yasser Arafat. The Foreign Minister Van Mierlo will defy anti-Israeli ban by visiting the PNA headquarters in East Jerusalem, the Orient House, and meet with Palestinian leader Faisal Hussein, said Mr. Schouten.

The balance of trade between Jordan and Holland is in favour of the latter by \$30 million. Between January and September of 1995, Holland exported foodstuffs worth \$50 million while Jordan exported goods worth \$20 million, most of it phosphates.

Queen Beatrix of Holland

visited Jordan in late 1994. Holland has financed the building of Gaza port and extended grants to the PNA. It will also send observers to the Jan. 20 elections in Gaza and the West Bank for a self-rule council.

The Dutch ambassador to Syria, Robert Meys, told AFP that Mr. Kok and Mr. Van Mierlo would discuss political and economic issues with their Syrian counterparts, Mahmoud Al Zoubi and Farouk Al Sharaa.

Mr. Meys said the visit was evidence of "an improvement in relations between the Netherlands and the European Union on one side, and Syria on the other."

In 1993, the then Dutch foreign minister, Pieter Koijmans, visited Damascus, while Mr. Sharaa went to Holland in September 1994.

The official Syrian news agency SANA said Mr. Kok's visit was aimed at "developing and deepening relations and bilateral cooperation."

Yilmaz under Islamist pressure

ANKARA (AFP) — Necmettin Erbakan, leader of the Islamic party which won elections last month, has turned the pressure on a leading conservative politician to join him in forming a new Turkish government ahead of crucial talks.

But the charm offensive has left Mesut Yilmaz with a difficult choice that could split his party between the lay and Islamic factions.

Analysts warned Mr. Yilmaz that he should reject the advances of the Islamic party at a meeting scheduled for Saturday with Mr. Erbakan.

Turkish President Suleyman Demirel appointed the Welfare Party (Refah) leader prime minister-designate, after his party became the largest in parliament, but, with only 158 seats out of the 550 in the assembly, short of the 276 needed for an absolute majority.

Mr. Yilmaz, whose party has 132 seats, is the only leader of Turkey's traditional parties who has not ruled out a coalition with Mr. Erbakan. His only precondition for talks is that the Welfare Party (Refah) should apologise for its "defamation" of Mr. Yilmaz's Motherland Party during the electoral campaign.

Religious elements in his Motherland Party, including several deputies who are members of Islamic sects, are clamouring for an alliance with the Refah.

From the opposite camp, some 40 other deputies have warned that they will leave the party if Mr. Yilmaz unites with Mr. Erbakan.

Analysis have said Mr. Yilmaz would have more to lose than to gain if he launched himself into an alliance with the Islamic party.

"If Mr. Yilmaz acts with common sense and understands what Turkey expects, he will say 'no' to Refah," an editorial in the daily newspaper Sabah said.

"If he says 'yes,' his party may well disintegrate," he warned.

Another commentator wrote that, in teaming up with Refah, Mr. Yilmaz could, in the short-term, win the post of deputy prime minister and perhaps a significant ministerial portfolio, such as foreign affairs.

However, he would alienate a large percentage of the electorate.

For the long-term, he continued, Mr. Yilmaz should "abandon his great scheme to be the leader of the traditional Turkish right."

Primakov: Russian interests a priority

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia's new foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov, who formerly headed the foreign intelligence service, pledged Friday to boost the ministry's efforts to protect Russian national interests.

Mr. Primakov, who was appointed Tuesday, told reporters that the foreign ministry should also aim for further economic integration with former Soviet republics.

"I see my appointment as the need to strengthen the foreign ministry's efforts to protect Russia's national interests," Mr. Primakov said. He said the sovereignty of the 15 former Soviet republics, 12 of which are in the Commonwealth of Independent States, "cannot negate the need for economic integration."

He called for "strengthening the centralising trends in the former Soviet Union."

Mr. Primakov, 66, who had headed the foreign intelligence service (SVR) since October 1991, was appointed as the successor to Dovish Foreign Minister

Andrei Kozyrev who resigned a week ago after five years in office.

Despite President Boris Yeltsin's assertion that foreign policy would not change under Mr. Primakov, the appointment has already been viewed as a change of direction following the generally pro-Western line pursued by Mr. Kozyrev.

Mr. Primakov said Friday Russia "was and remains a great world power and its (foreign) policy must conform to that status."

Referring to relations with the West, he called for "partnership ties with former enemies on condition that the partnership is equal, and mutually advantageous."

"We won the cold war together and in that war there were no winners and no losers," he said.

He also stressed the need to "develop ties between states to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction."

He voiced confidence that his policy guidelines would be supported by the Duma.

Identity of ex-Shin Bet chief unveiled in Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — The name is Gilon. Karmi Gilon, the Israeli security chief whose agency failed to protect Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin from an assassin.

Breaking a bond of security, the Israeli media on Friday unmasked the outgoing chief of Israel's Shin Bet internal security agency, previously known only by a Hebrew initial "Kaf," a day after his name appeared in the Washington Post.

It was a final indignity before Mr. Gilon, who tendered his resignation this week over the Shin Bet's failure to shield Mr. Rabin from assassination by a Jewish extremist, leaves the agency he headed for only 10 months.

As a rule, military censors forbid reporters — local and foreign — in Israel from disclosing the name of a Shin Bet chief and ban newspapers and television stations from showing his picture.

The Washington Post's Jerusalem correspondent named Gilon in a report on Thursday. The Israeli media then followed suit under a long-established procedure of reporting a state secret once it is spilled in the foreign press.

It was not much of a secret, anyway.

"Children know (his name), America knows it and now the citizens of Israel know," Israel Television news anchorman Haim Yavin Dryly told viewers.

Mr. Gilon's identity was so well-known in the Jewish state that his name was scrawled in graffiti outside the military censor's office after his appointment in

March. A message on the Internet, the worldwide computer network, asking people to send congratulations to his address — which was listed — also appeared at the time, apparently the work of high-tech ultranationalist Jews who viewed Mr. Gilon as an enemy.

Only two days before the Washington Post report appeared, the name of Mr. Gilon's successor, Reserve Admiral Ami Ayalon, was carried in several Israeli newspapers. One editor argued that the Shin Bet could no longer exist in the "twilight zone."

There has been only silence from the embattled office of the military censor, which declined comment on Friday about the whole affair.

"The chief censor was out of the country and so was the prime minister. There was an ambush," grumbled retired Brigadier General Ephraim Lapid, a former chief spokesman of the Israeli army.

"I cannot point to any dramatic damage being done but this was not exactly the process through which one changes a policy on making things public," he told Israel Radio.

Israel's biggest-selling newspaper Tedieth Ahronoth published two photographs of Mr. Gilon on Friday.

Like his identity, his image is still officially banned. But Yedieth only slightly blurred the photos — which not only his mother would recognize — of the young, respected, chunky chief.

Snow hits American east coast again

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. east coast, still struggling to claw through mountains of snow left by one of the worst blizzards in decades, braced for another assault on Friday as a fresh storm approached from the south-west, carrying snow and perhaps some freezing rain.

The federal government closed down for the fourth day this week as more snow began falling on the Washington area.

The Office of Personnel Management announced the closure early on Friday after five centimetres of snow fell on the capital. The government had only just reopened on Thursday and was still digging out from last weekend's heavy snowfall that shut down its operations for the first three days of the week.

In cities still floundering in up to 75 centimetres of snow left by last weekend's storm, shoppers piled into stores to stock up on supplies and nervous officials eyed new delays at airports, on roadways and rail lines.

"It's creating havoc," a spokesman for Philadelphia's Wonderbread bakery said as area stores struggled to keep their shelves stocked. "People panic at the mere mention of snow and buy bread, milk and eggs. It's almost like people don't realise tomorrow is coming."

President Bill Clinton announced on Thursday that federal disaster assistance would flow to states hit hardest by the last blizzard, which has been blamed for as many as 85 deaths stretching between North Carolina and Maine.

In Washington, D.C., forecasters predicted a new layer of up to 20-25 centimetres.

In the New York area, weather forecasters said they expected the snow to start Friday morning, with accumulations on the coast and in New York City. They said a mixture of snow and freezing rain would continue into Saturday.

The threat of more snow came before many on the east coast had time to catch their breaths from the last storm.

Airports which were struggling to get back on track after days of closures and delays were facing the prospect of more disruptions if the weather turned nasty.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Key suspect in blasts may be deported to India

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's federal investigators said Friday they were seeking the extradition from Bahrain of a key suspect accused in the 1993 Bombay blasts case, the Press Trust of India reported. Anis Ibrahim, brother of the Dubai-based Dawood Ibrahim who is alleged to have underworld links, was arrested by Bahrain police and Interpol at a hotel in Bahrain on Thursday. "Although India and Bahrain do not have an extradition treaty, deportation of Anis can be sought by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)," the CBI lawyer, S.N. Tiwari, told the news agency in Bombay. "The CBI is moving ahead in that direction," Mr. Tiwari said. More than 300 people were killed and over 1,000 injured in the March 12, 1993 blasts at the Bombay Stock Exchange. Air India headquarters and other prominent landmarks. The accused was being tracked by the Interpol and arrested after an alert issued by Interpol on the request of the CBI.

Court reduces Greek Cypriot's sentence

ANKARA (AFP) — A Turkish Cypriot appeal court cut a jail sentence on a Greek Cypriot who entered a military zone from nine months to 45 days on Friday, the Turkish Cypriot news agency TAK said. The court in the self-proclaimed Turkish republic of northern Cyprus ruled that Yannis Apostolides could be released on Jan. 19 if he also paid a fine of \$20,000 to cover damage to equipment belonging to security forces. Mr. Apostolides, who was arrested on Nov. 16 after smashing his jeep through the green line separating Greek and Turkish-controlled sectors of Nicosia, faces five years imprisonment if he fails to pay the fine, the agency said.

Velayati visits Kuwait on Monday

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati is to visit Kuwait on Monday on a two-day mission to discuss bilateral relations and developments in Iraq and other parts of the Gulf, officials said. The official Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) said Mr. Velayati would meet his Kuwaiti counterpart, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah. Senior officials in Kuwait and Iran have visited each other's countries several times in the past two years.

French deputies to Iraq over U.N. sanctions

PARIS (AFP) — A group of French parliamentary deputies to travel to Iraq later this month on a fact-finding mission over Baghdad's compliance with U.N. resolutions imposed on it after the Gulf war, officials said Friday. The three-man delegation, from the foreign affairs committee of the National Assembly, will visit Iraq from Jan. 15-23, a statement said. Led by former Foreign Minister Jean-Bernard Raimond, the group will "examine the conditions of application of U.N. resolutions and take stock of the situation in Iraq from the political and humanitarian point of view." France is known to support pressure for the U.N. sanctions against Baghdad, which are subject to regular review, to be eased in view of the humanitarian burdens they put on the Iraqi people. It is the first such official trip by a delegation of French deputies, with government approval.

U.S. condemns killing of Turkish businessman

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States on Thursday condemned the assassination of leading Turkish industrialist Ozdemir Sabanci as a cowardly terrorist act. "It's quite clear it was a... cowardly terrorist act," deputy State Department spokesman Glyn Davies told reporters. He said the State Department had not yet received details on the incident from its embassy in Ankara. "But it seems quite plain that it was an act carried out to create terror among those in private industry in Turkey and high ranking government officials. 'It's obviously the sort of thing we reject and denounce and condemn.' Sabanci, 54, head of the automotive group of Sabanci Holding and chief executive of the Toyota car joint venture with Japan, was gunned down in his luxury office in Istanbul by left-wing urban guerrillas on Tuesday. A manager and a secretary were also killed.

Mitterrand 'chose own time to die'

PARIS (Agencies) — Former President Francois Mitterrand, buried on Thursday in his hometown in southwest France, prepared meticulously for his death, even choosing the day on which to die, friends and associates said on Friday.

"A few days before his death, he told me, 'now I have my philosophy,'" Roland Dumas, a close Mitterrand friend and former foreign minister, told France 2 television.

Last Saturday, Mr. Mitterrand, who had long suffered from prostate cancer, asked his personal doctor Jean-Pierre Tarot what would happen if he stopped taking all drugs except painkillers, according to the French daily, Le Monde.

Dr. Tarot responded that he would be dead within three days, the newspaper said.

Mr. Mitterrand died on Monday morning, aged 79. He had left office eight months earlier after a record 14 years as French head of state.

The crusty ex-president, an agnostic fascinated by death and religion who read and wrote prodigiously, worked on his memoirs until the very end, his editor told the daily France-Soir.

"He worked on it until his last day alive, and he completed the task," the unnamed editor at the Odile Jacob publishing house was quoted as saying. Odile Jacob has declined all official comment on the memoirs.

Mr. Mitterrand, who shunned a typewriter or word processor in favour of an old-fashioned fountain pen, intended to work on the project even on the morning of his death, but did not feel well enough to do so and went back to sleep, France-Soir said, citing unnamed associates. He never woke up.

His burial in a quiet private ceremony triggered a muted debate in France over the propriety of Mr. Mitterrand's longtime companion and their illegitimate daughter joining his family for the solemn burial.

Most French newspapers featured large photographs of companion Anne Pingeot and Mazarine, their daughter born out of wedlock in 1974, standing side by side with Mr. Mitterrand's wife Danielle and their two sons.

"A family photo that only the French people would allow," headlined the French daily Liberation, adding that such a scene would be "inconceivable in the United States and scandalous on the other side of the (English) Channel."

The veil of discretion surrounding his dual private life, an open secret in the political establishment, was torn in 1994 when Paris-Match magazine published the first pictures of Mazarine strolling with her father.

On Saturday, having decided to stop everything but painkillers, Mr. Mitterrand isolated himself in his apartment and wrote the testament, in particular setting out detailed arrangements of his own funeral, Le Monde said.

"There can be a mass," it cited the three-page document as saying, referring to the family service held at Eglise Saint-Pierre in Jarnac on Thursday, shortly before his burial.

On Sunday he gave the document to Dr. Tarot, entrusting him to give it to Mr. Rousselet and to his family, after his death.

The document, given to Mr. Rousselet the following day, specified the arrangements for the Jarnac ceremony: no speeches, no media, and no flowers except two bouquets — one of roses and one of yellow and white lilies.

The requests were carried out to the letter at Thursday's simple funeral, which was held simultaneously with a memorial mass in Notre Dame cathedral in Paris attended by some 60 heads of state and government.

Describing the final hours of Mr. Mitterrand's life, Le Monde said he woke Monday morning at about 7:30 a.m. saying he had not slept well. He then drifted back to sleep, and died peacefully a short time later.

Meanwhile, Danielle Mitterrand said Friday she had been deeply moved by the tributes to her husband during a memorial service in Paris.

In a statement she thanked all those who paid their respects, including statesmen, colleagues and friends.

COLUMN

Clinton says legal battles risk bankruptcy

WASHINGTON (R) — President Clinton said his legal battles and those of his wife have pushed them near bankruptcy, but he was more troubled by the cost to lower-level White House aides forced to hire lawyers. "I didn't run for this office for the money," Mr. Clinton told a White House news conference, "and I feel badly that 20 years of our hard effort and savings may go away." Money magazine reported that it had examined the financial affairs of the president, and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, and concluded they were "on a collision course with bankruptcy."

Police hold alleged stalker of Princess Anne

LONDON (R) — Police detained a man they say has been stalking Princess Anne near a church she was about to visit in Liverpool, northwest England. Bernard Quinn, 53, was remanded in custody overnight. Police said inquiries were continuing "to see whether it was appropriate" that he should be charged.

Family of murder case victim urge video boycott

LOS ANGELES (R) — The family of one of the victims in the O.J. Simpson double murder case called for a boycott of a new video in which the former American football star ridiculed the prosecution's theories about the crime of which he was acquitted. The call came as the production company geared up for a national TV advertising blitz for the video: "O.J. Simpson: The interview," which will sell for \$29.95 through mail order. "We are urging people not to buy this," said Kim Goldman, whose brother Ronald was murdered along with Simpson's ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson in June 1994.

French TV presenter suspended

PARIS (R) — France's best-known television news presenter was suspended from his job after an appeals court convicted him in a sleaze case symbolising easy money in French politics in the 1980s. Private television station TF1 said Patrick Poivre d'Arvor would be suspended from presenting its main evening news programme until March 28. An appeals court in the city of Lyon upheld a 15-month suspended sentence and a 200,000 Franc (\$40,000) fine imposed by a lower court. Mr. Poivre d'Arvor, one of several defendants sentenced, was convicted of accepting lavish gifts and Caribbean holidays from a businessman trying to further the career of former Lyon Mayor Michel Noir.

Inventor of non-stick frying pan dies

NICE, France (R) — Marc Gregoire, inventor of the non-stick frying pan, has died in the French Riviera town of Tourrette-sur-Loup, aged 90, his family said. A passionate fisherman and research engineer at France's National Aeronautical Research Office, Gregoire stumbled on the process for making a pan that did not need butter or cooking oil while searching for a way to perfect his home-made fishing rods.